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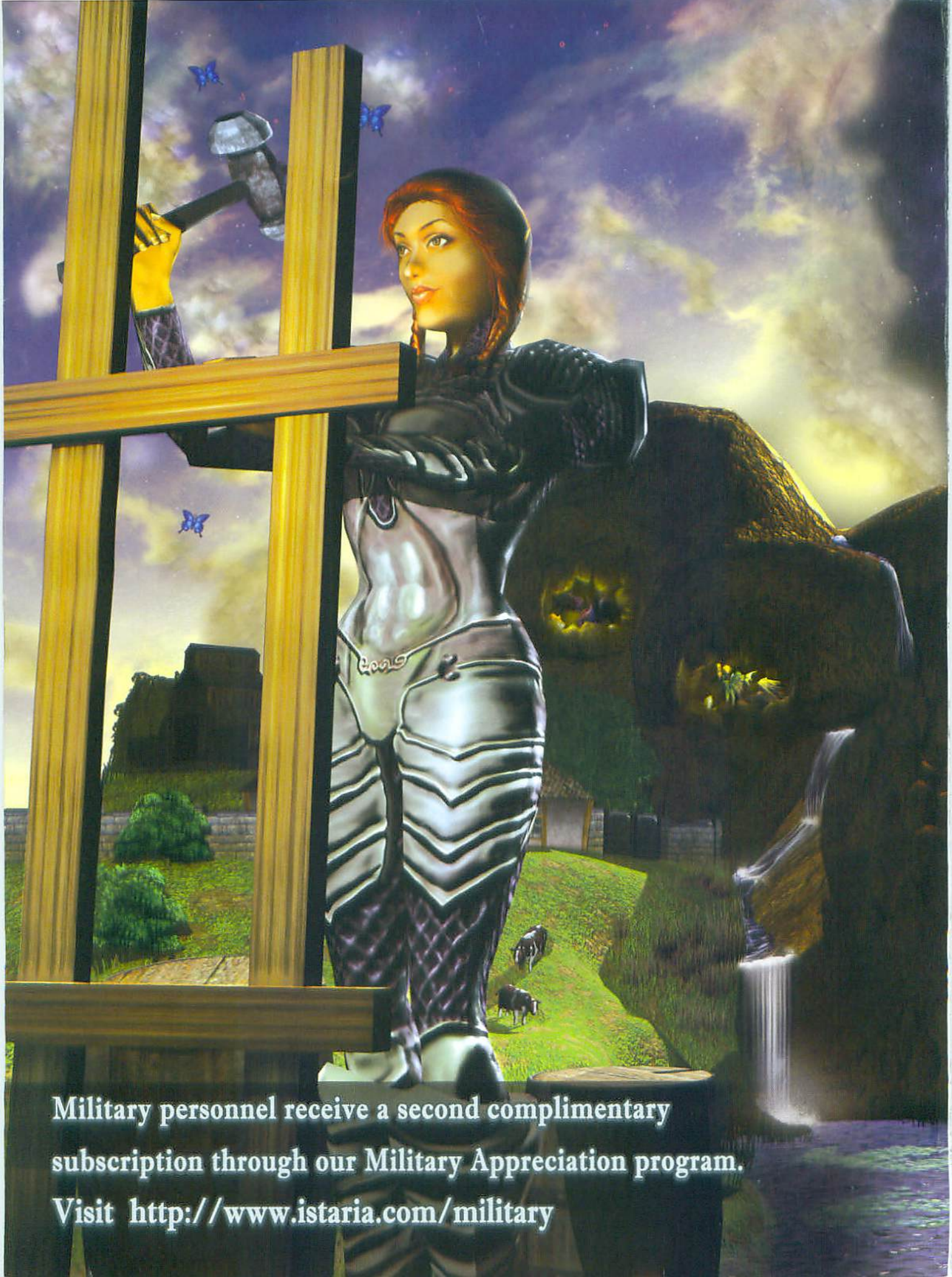
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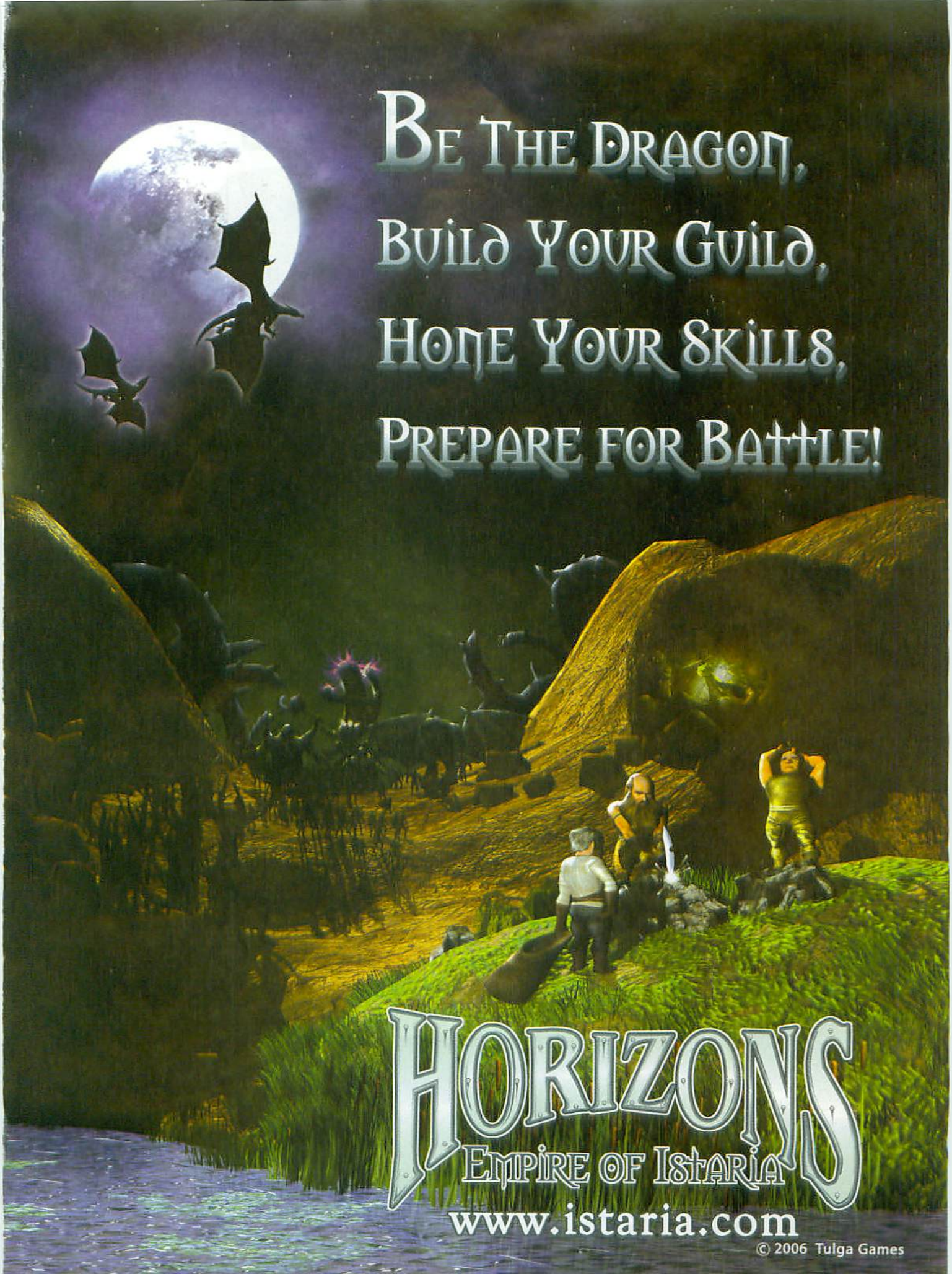
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Dragon® (USPS 318-790) is published monthly by Paizo Publishing, LLC, 2700 Richards Road, Suite 201 Bellevue, WA 98005-4200, United States of America. (ISSN# 1062-2101) Periodicals Postage Paid at Bellevue, WA, and at additional mailing offices.

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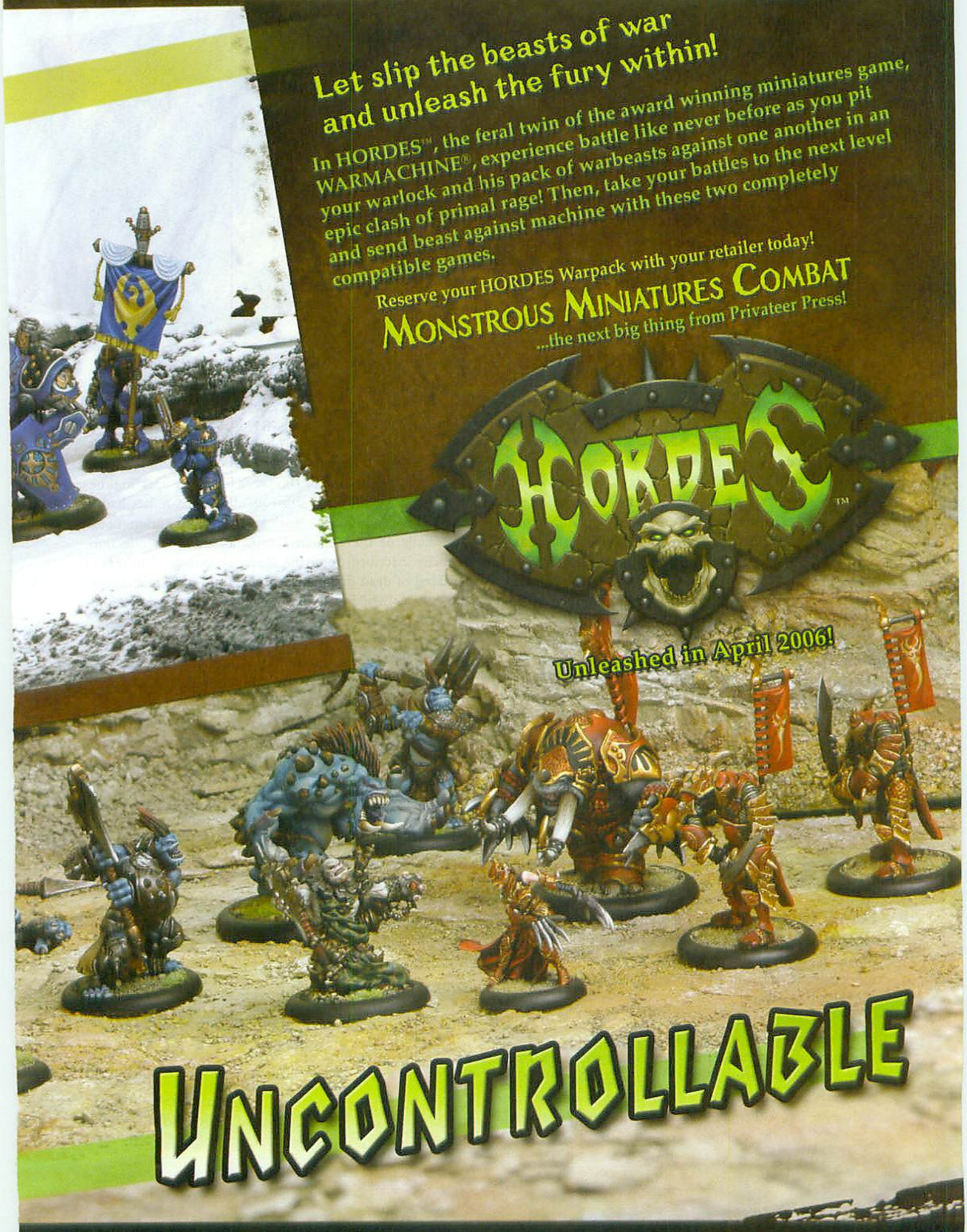
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WORTH THE WAIT

In 1999, I left the frigid sanctuary of Minnesota for Seattle and Wizards of the Coast, where I took the editorial reins of *Polyhedron* newszine, the official magazine of the RPGA Network. My first issue was #136, and it didn't take long before I started thinking about #150. Magazine editors love "milestone" issues, because they give us the chance to pull off something really special. Back in my *Polyhedron* days, I'd planned a huge overview of the organized play gamer network packed with interviews and photographs of key volunteers from throughout the organization's history. Shortly after I was hired, however, company-wide budget cuts resulted in me being transferred to the periodicals department and *Polyhedron* shifting its focus away from strict RPGA coverage and toward the brand new d20 System and the hordes of support products coming out from a variety of publishers. The glorious *Polyhedron* #150 turned out to be 60 pages tacked onto the back of *Dungeon* #91, and although it served as the world's first good look at d20 Modern, the issue didn't contain much that resembled my original plans.

About this time, I began sitting in on the weekly *Dragon* and *Dungeon* editorial meetings. *Dragon* editor Jesse Decker had big things in store for the blockbuster #300, and I remember thinking how sweet it would be to get a crack at a special issue of the industry's flagship title. I worked with *Dungeon* Editor-in-Chief Chris Thomasson to produce about a quarter of the milestone 100th issue of *Dungeon*, contributing a githyanki Mini-Game that tied into the *Dragon*/*Dungeon* "Incursion" crossover. Working with author James Wyatt and a bunch of really talented artists was a real career highlight, but 25% is not 100%, and I never really felt like *Dungeon* #100 was my baby. When Thomasson left to join the editing department at Wizards, I inherited the magazine—about six months too late to drive the milestone issue.

I ascended to the Throne of the Gods—which is to say the editor-in-chief chair here at *Dragon*—with issue #327, a little less than two years away from *Dragon* #350, which I suppose is a milestone issue. It didn't take long, however, before I realized what I'd been given. The true milestone didn't come with #350, but with #344, *Dragon's* 30th anniversary issue. Controlling what makes it into such an important issue was a huge responsibility, but I knew it would also be a whole lot of fun—I've been enjoying every minute of it.

So what's in store? For starters, we'll be wrapping the oversized issue in one of the most beautiful covers in *Dragon's* history, a truly stunning portrait of Tiamat by painter Steve Prescott. In celebration of *Dragon's* first issue back in June of 1976, just about every subsequent June issue has had a draconic theme, and this year's issue is no exception. Look for "Skulls of the Dragon Lords," an exciting collection of spells inscribed upon the skulls of long-dead dragons. Speaking of dead dragons, #344 also features "The Ecology of the Dracolich," by *Dungeon* superstars Richard Pett and Greg A. Vaughan.

Paizo staffers have also joined the act, with Associate Editor Mike McArtor providing four new planar dragons, and newly minted *Dungeon* Assistant Editor James Lafond Sutter will be telling us all about his recent visit to the RPG R&D department at Wizards of the Coast—the magical candy factory where Dungeons & Dragons is born.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, you say. Enough about the Paizo hacks. How about some real talent?

Will Gary Gygax, Ed Greenwood, and Keith Baker suffice? The creators of Greyhawk, the Forgotten Realms, and Eberron each contributed a short story or feature article in celebration of *Dragon's* 30th year. Take to the streets of the Free City with Gord the Rogue, listen in at the gossip of the Wizards Three, or escape from the clutches of Eberron's Dreadhold prison island only in *Dragon* #344.

Don't forget to bring your dice.

Erik Mona
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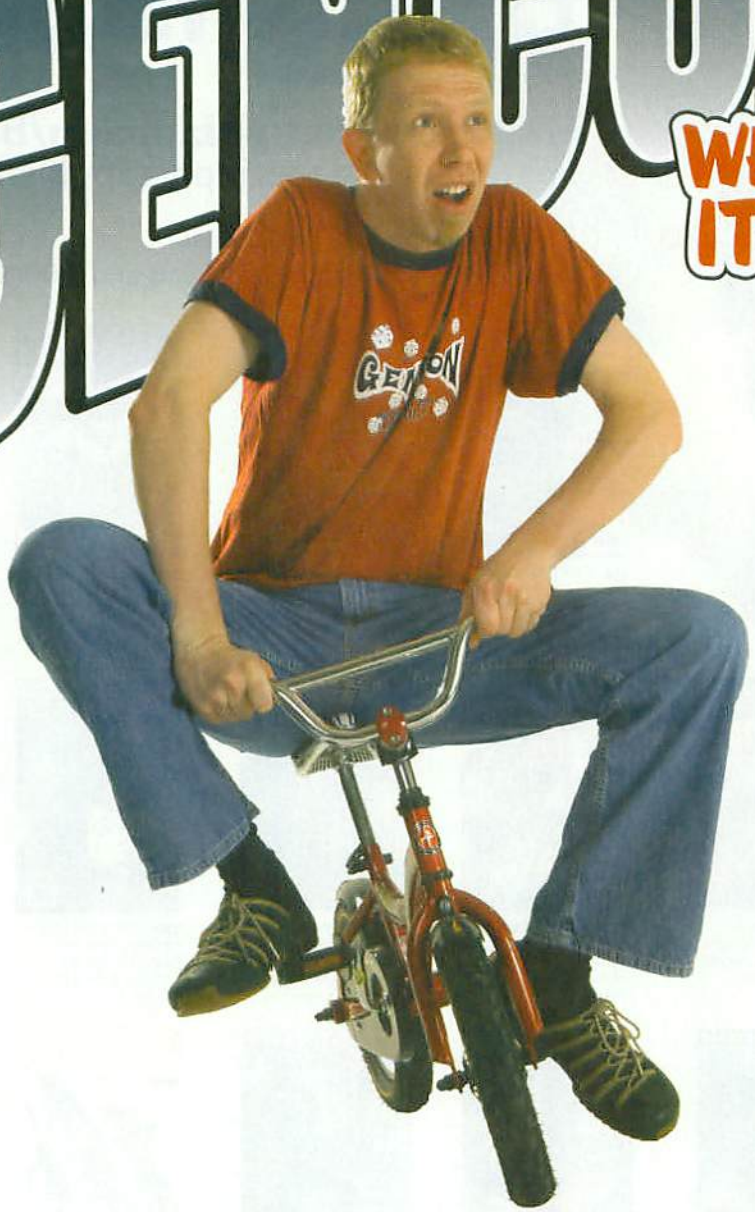

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338 - Core Beliefs: Boccob, arcane colleges, magic staves, and the ecology and spells of the spell weaver.

337 - Demonomicon: Zuggtmoy, mind monsters, the Lords of Dust revealed, and a D&D minis-scale poster map.

336 - Birth of the dead, haunted houses, ecology of the spawn of Kyuss, and Iggwilv's demonomicon detailed.

335 - Waterdeep bard college, interview with Ed Greenwood, and Elaine Cunningham fiction.

334 - 6 new Arabian monsters, new types of alchemist's fire, and plenty of fantasy booze.

333 - The deceit of Fraz-Urb'luu, the right of nobility, and the relics of the Realms.

332 - Play a chromatic dragon, chop up a dead wyrm, and listen to the whispers of the Dragon Below.

331 - Master pole arms with a complete guide, wear alchemical charms, and drive around in a beholder.

330 - Bring the Far Realm to your campaign, along with Eberron drow and the evil jester.

329 - Learn the dread secrets of Pazuzu, travel with Beowulf, and worship Mesopotamian gods.

328 - Dwarves at war, mystic elven keepers, overweight halflings, and scaly shapeshifters.

327 - Explore real world tombs, divvy up the loot, and learn to watch your back.

325 - Unlock the power of your bloodline and discover your character's home.

324 - Eberron's nightmares come to life, arctic monsters, and Cthulhu in D&D.

323 - Dragon Unleashed, an interview with R.A. Salvatore, and 7 sinful domains.

322 - Darkness reigns in the shadow city, ecology of the dark ones, and shady characters.

321 - Planar dragons, creatures of brilliance, heavenly prestige classes, and guns.

319 - Dark Sun player's handbook, more Greyhawk feats, and animalistic prestige classes.

318 - Secretive ninjas, daring pirates, and ferocious dinosaurs, oh my.

317 - Truenames, power components, urban druids, and a race of rock men.

316 - Master the art of espionage, get the spy gear you need, and a terrain tile.

315 - Ravenloft, Dark Sun, Dragonlance, Greyhawk, Forgotten Realms, and more.

314 - Master the elements with new spells, feats, magic items, and prestige classes.

313 - Psychotic dragons, armored beholders, and mind flayers invading your thoughts.

312 - Blackguards, necromancers, and assassins for your game, plus ecology of the drider.

311 - Variant spellcasters, bardic prestige classes, plus the first look at EBERRON.

309 - The art of war and the incursion of the Githyanki crossover with *DUNGEON* 100.

308 - Dragon magic and gear, mind flayer weapons, and a giant dragon-size poster.

307 - Heroes of the FORGOTTEN REALMS, poster map of Westeros, and undead templates.

306 - Eighteen new fiends, urban traps, heroic fantasy, and the LIVING GREYHAWK Journal.

305 -Urban heroes, divine gifts, yuan-ti cults, and a town and sewer poster map.

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Erik Mona will not be seen this issue so that we can bring this special presentation of letters answered by the DRAGON *staff.*

REALMS NET CATCHES ANOTHER

I have been an avid fan and reader of your magazine since the introduction of 3rd edition. I have never, however, gotten myself a subscription. I would buy issue after issue from the news stands, spending $6 to $7 bucks a pop like some schmuck. Then, after the "Relics of Faerûn" article in issue #333, I started to see the advantage in subscribing. I was further hooked when I saw the cover of issue #335. Waterdeep?! Fiction by Elaine Cunningham?! I was hooked. And, although I am biased toward the FORGOTTEN REALMS, I am also pleased to see you giving different campaigns equal time in the spotlight (including discontinued campaigns, such as PLANESCAPE, MYSTARA, and SPELLJAMMER, as you proved in issue #339). I love it. Class Acts is a new classic, and the Bazaar of the Bizarre is one of the most useful and ingenious articles in gaming. I'm subscribing. I'm seriously considering the *DRAGON Compendium* as well. Pat yourselves on the back. You're doing a stand-up job.

I do have an ulterior motive, however. *Next time* you visit the Realms, would you mind printing some monster templates? You'd be surprised how many templates people post on the Wizards of the Coast message boards, and I'd like to see some official material based off them. Maybe do it for the schmuck who's been spending $6 to $7 bucks a pop at the newstand.

Thanks for being worth buying.

Tyler of Bremerton
Via Email

Tyler, you will be happy to know that we have a number of great FORGOTTEN REALMS *articles slated for upcoming issues, including another "City of the Realms" article by Ed Greenwood. As for monster templates, we are always looking for a new way to twist the familiar into a new terror. Aspiring authors should check out our writers guidelines at* ***paizo.com****. –JMB*

HIGH PRICE, LOW ADS

I would just like to point something out to whoever "Anonymous" was that pointed out the high price of subscription to the magazine. Both *DUNGEON* and *DRAGON* magazines have far fewer advertisements than a lot of the cheaper subscription magazines out there. Look at the majority of men's magazines out there, they may be thicker, but it's all just a bunch of ads that make that bulk. And my God, don't get me started

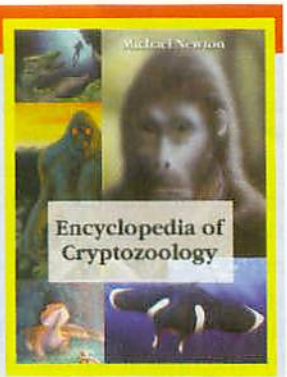
MINIS OF THE MONTH

Teeny Tiny terrors lurk in a number of sets of the *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Miniatures* game, including the Imp (from *Angelfire*), the Quasit (from *Giants of Legend*), and the newly produced Flameskull (from *War Drums*). Each of these uncommon miniatures makes for a great improved familiar or minion to a more powerful creature.

For the skirmish game, these creatures have seen little competitive play but deserve another look. Of the Tiny creatures the Flameskull is the most compelling, with its super reliable ranged attack (+18 for 5 fire damage), numerous immunities, and its short range *fireball*, this 25-point Tiny miniature is an interesting addition the ranks of Lawful Evil. Coming in at an affordable 19 points, the quasit is a reasonable buy just for its fear cone, capable of clearing out a lot of low-level creatures in one activation.

DRAGON'S HOARD CONTEST

Dragon Talk



Dragon along with McFarland Press—publishers of scholarly works from the *Encyclopedia of Ancient Deities* to *The Mexican Masked Wrestler and Monster Filmography*—are giving away one of most comprehensive monstrous bestiaries ever written. This isn't the *Monster Manual*, though. This is Michael Newton's *Encyclopedia of Cryptozoology*, a 576-page scholarly tome researching and detailing 2,744 reports of real world cryptids, creatures, myths, and monsters. A favorite of the *Dragon* and *Dungeon* staffs (detailed in First Watch in *Dragon* #341), anyone who answers the following three questions has a shot at winning:

1) Who wrote the *Encyclopedia of Intoxication in Mythology* by McFarland Press?
2) In this issue, what monster is sometimes known as the "goat sucker?"
3) Who edited *The Medieval Hero on Screen* by McFarland Press?

Once you know, send an email titled "Cryptocontest" to **contest@paizo.com** along with your name, answer, and mailing address by June 1st. In August we'll announce one winner and send him or her off their very own copy of the *Encyclopedia of Cryptozoology*.

Those looking for the answers to these questions might find help at either McFarland Press's website (**mcfarlandpub.com**) or at **paizo.com**. Good luck!

on those $1.99 200+ page women's magazines, which have 75% of their pages as ads.

The magazines that Paizo puts out are well worth the relatively high price to me. I also subscribe to a car magazine, which costs a little more than half the price of *Dragon*, but it has three times as many ads, if not more.

Kuya Ryan Bernardo
Via Email

PRAISE FOR 341

In the past few years it seems like the quality of *Dragon* has been very erratic. However the issue that arrived today I would qualify as outstanding. "Forging Friends," "Lesser Golems," "Warforged Magic," "Ecology of the Inevitable," "Mind Blade Feats," and "Familiar Flavoring" were all of personal interest to me. I also felt that they were all well written.

Also, yay for *Order of the Stick* being in *Dragon* now!

Obviously everyone has different interests in what they want to see and not every issue can be a hit with every subscriber, but if even a third of the issues that come out each year were of this high a quality I would be ecstatic to renew my subscription.

Thanks, and Cheers.

JLB
Via Email

QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS

First off I want to say great job on the *Dragon Compendium, Vol. 1*. I finally found it and it was worth the wait (I've been trying to find it since its release date). So far do you have plans to come out with the other compendiums Mr. Mona was speaking of in his recent editorial?

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

Question: Which of the following monsters did not first appear in a *Dragon* Creature Catalog?

A) Phasm
B) Lillend
C) Dark Naga
D) Giant Killer Whale

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Now for a quick questions or two. I loved the chromatic dragons sections with the orange, yellow, and purple dragons, and I was wondering if there were any half-dragon templates for these or if they were going to be printed elsewhere.

I was also wondering if other *Dragon Compendiums* were to come out, if perhaps there would be one devoted to dragons. I have a whole collection of Dragon since day one and there are so many articles for dragons that a compilation would be an awesome book by itself. I mean the *Draconomicon* was nice, but I felt it could have had so much more.

Also, do you guys plan on printing some more planar dragons? Just wondering because the others (in Dragon #300 and #321) are awesome and I think a few planes were missing, such as the Abyss, the Nine Hells and two more I think (I believe I counted four all together).

Finally, and my apologies on all the dragon talk but this is Dungeons & Dragons and it's nice to see information on the iconic beast, but do you have any idea if the rest of the linnorms are planned to be printed by either you or Wizards of the Coast? I know they were in the *Monster Manual II* (the gray, dread, and corpse tearer), but it would be nice to see the rest of them.

Thank you all very much and keep up the good work, the magazine is excellent and I couldn't ask for more. Thanks again.

Rob
Via Email

Rob, we are certainly glad that you like the Dragon Compendium, Vol. 1, and if we put together a Volume 2, you can rest assured that a number of classic dragons will find their way into its pages. As for new dragons, you might want to check out the "Creature Catalog V" in this issue for a pair of new wyrms. Planar dragons make a reappearance in #344, our upcoming 30th anniversary issue, including the Abyssal dragon, Astral dragon, the Elysian dragon, and the Hades dragon. There are even more to come. -JMB

LIKE. TOTALLY RAD

About, oh, twenty years ago, Dragon published a poem called "Valley Elf." I was wondering if you might know how I can get a copy of this poem. Unfortunately, I don't remember the author

Valley Elf

Valley Elf,
He's a Valley Elf,
Valley Elf,
He's a Valley Elf...

So cool, so fair,
With chartreuse hair,
So young, secure—

"Fer sure, fer sure,
like, oh, man, I was really *down* today,
like, sooo *down*,
I almost flunked *archery* today,
I was blitzed totally, it was
wrong. Like, I wore my elven cloak
into the *dungeon*, y'know, and it got all
grody with, wow, like
spider webs and *green slime* all over it,
like *yucko*, like
when I saw it when we got out I thought, oh,
gag me with a *wand*,
it was *grody* to the *max*, just *psionic*, like,
and I had to clean it, oh,
gross me *out*, man.
Totally *awesome*. I *hate* to go in *dungeons*,
they are so *rank*, and some of the monsters
just like
freak me out, man, like wow,
I even saw a fer real monster, like *real* close up
once, and it was *really*, like totally
disgusting, *barf city* man, it was *so gross*
that I thought, like, Hey, keep away from *me*,
man!
Like *no way* I'm gonna ever even use *my* sword
on *you*, I just *waxed* it, y'know, like
gag me with a mace."

Valley Elf,
He's a Valley Elf,
Valley Elf,
He's a Valley Elf...

North of Geoff, South of Ket,
By the River Javan wet,
Living with the stubby gnomes,
The Valley Elves do make their homes.

"Sure, totally, y'know, I had a dog, man,
a cooshee, like he was special,
a Gucci cooshee poochie,
he had designer genes, like, really rare,
he was just *awesome*, but not too housebroken.
I had to clean up after him, and that was
like *grody*,
just *gross to the max*, but, wow,
like, no biggie, cuz he was my
dog, y'know, but he's gone now, totally, see,
I met the *mage* the other day, and, *wow*, man,
the *mage* has got like *no*,
totally no sense of humor. Like, I made a joke,
y'know, I thought it was *super*,
like, I saw the *mage* and said like, hey,
we're in the Valley of the Jolly,
like, Ho Ho Ho, Green Valley Mage
just like the freakin' commercials,
but he just looked at me, like *wow*,
he must have *really* been *out of it*, man,
like he was so out of it he threw
one of those, like, *meteor swarms* at me, it
was just
awesome, I mean it was just, oh *wow* man,
it was
astral, and it missed me and hit my dog,
my designer dog, like,
crispy critter *city*,
I was *really* bummed out, really bad like."

Valley Elf,
He's a Valley Elf,
Valley Elf,
He's a Valley Elf...

He's a super Valley Elf,
So chaotic, sure of self,
Tall and thin and fair of face,
His brain is lost in outer space.

"Oh, super, like I live in the
good part of the Valley,
y'know, where we're all into, like,
real *ethereal* things, like
I got a set of designer *ring* mail
for my birthday, I was totally
freaked out, like, my old set was getting
full of wrinkles and it had
blood on it from where I cut myself
with my short sword, yeah, really, like
agony, man, I was in *total* agony
for an *hour*. *Really*,
but now I'm together, like,
fer sure, *no problem*.
That was *close*, man,
like I was *so sure* I was gonna
pass out fer sure,
I lucked out *totally*.
Good thing."

or the issue it was in. The only thing I remember are a couple of lines: "So young and fair, with chartreuse hair. So sweet and pure, fer sure, fer sure."

Please let me know if you can help.

Diane Therrien
Via Email

The year was 1983, the month was April. The first mobile phone was demonstrated to a skeptical crowd, Ben Kingsley won an Oscar for his role in Ghandhi, *and the* Pioneeer 10 *spacecraft crossed Pluto's orbit and left our solar system for the cold deep reaches of space. Meanwhile,* DRAGON *#72 hit newsstands with an equal amount of fanfare, with a brand new feature called the "Ecology of the Piercer," an extensive treatise by Ed Greenwood on gemstones, and an entire raft of humor articles, including a song called "Valley Elf." It was totally written by some gamers in, like, Kentucky, man, who don't want their names used. Fer sure. Just for you, Diane, we have reprinted the song in its entirety. Apologies to Frank Zappa. -JMB*

MORE CLASSICS

I really enjoyed issue #339 of your fine magazine. I finally have 3.5 stats for one of my favorite monsters, the dusanu (being able to throw non-undead skeletons at my party is a very cool option against those cocky clerics).

I have also been thinking in the last few weeks that, in each of their times, all of these worlds had engaging storylines. So, what I thought would be cool would be if you ran a regular feature that highlighted various storyline elements of the "classic campaigns." Now, while an article in each issue would be cool, all you really need is a launch article for each world and then you could have two pages with a small box for each world that updated some part of its storyline. This would also be cool because you could use it to incorporate various DUNGEON adventures into other worlds.

Thank you for a fine magazine.

Karl Uebergang
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

All of us here on DRAGON *have our own pet campaign settings. Jason was long a guiding force behind the RPGA's Living* GREYHAWK *campaign, Mike knows more about* MYSTARA *than perhaps anyone ever should, I'll have arguments about "canon" related to* PLANESCAPE *and* RAVENLOFT, *and Erik quite literally wrote the book on* GREYHAWK. *All of our thinly veiled fandom is what makes January's Campaign Classics issue one of our favorites.*

While we don't currently have any plans to support some of the older campaign settings outside of January's issue—or the occasional special like #319's DARK SUN *issue—those who keep their eyes open can see our fan-boyish tendencies showing through every now and again. For example, check out issue #327 for an update of* MYSTARA'S *demonic diaboli, the article "Fast, Furious, and Fantastical" in #331 brought back the classic* chariot of Sustarre, *and the recent Spellcraft "The Ties that Bind" in #341 saw the resurrection of the god of* PLANESCAPE'S *infamous modrons, Primus—to say nothing of Vecna's immortal foe Kas. Several of our ongoing features are also wide-open windows into D&D's past, like the "Demonomicon of Iggwilv" and "Core Beliefs," which regularly retell and expand upon stories from the game's earliest days. So, while it might not be every month, keep a heads up and you'll find classic content in way more than just January's issue. –WS*

KNOWLEDGE CHECK ANSWER

Answer: The dark naga and (yes) the giant killer whale both appeared in DRAGON #98's "Creature Catalog," while the lillend appeared in DRAGON #94's "Creature Catalog II." The phasm first appeared in the third edition *Monster Manual*.

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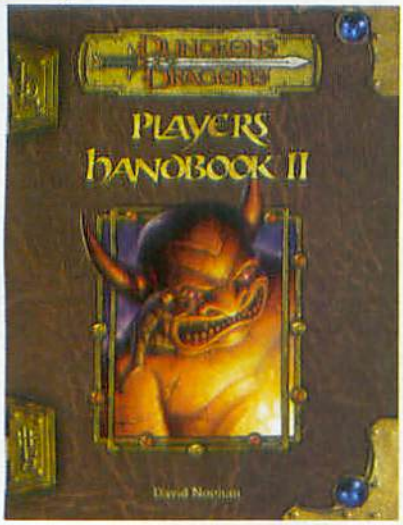
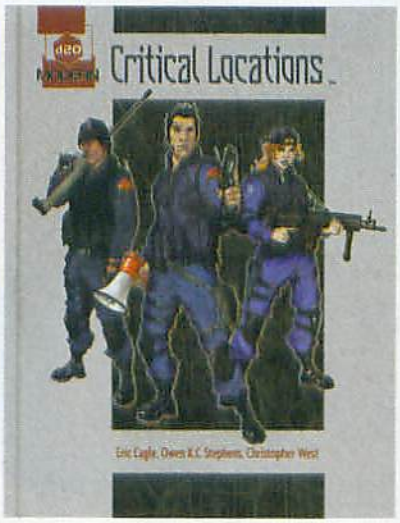
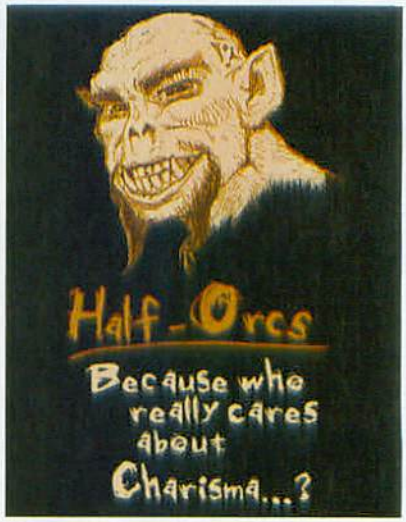


Create and customize your perfect PC with the *Player's Handbook II*. Designer David Noonan and a team of industry professionals invented not only new classes, like the mind-bending beguiler and the heroic knight, but also new spells, new feats, roleplaying advice, and much more. The book also offers a completely new way of handling organizations and affiliations, providing more tangential benefits for being a member of a specific group. Perhaps the most innovative new option provides a system in which players might rebuild their characters mid campaign. Discover all this and more in *Player's Handbook II*. –*S.B.*



D20 Critical Locations collects forty full-page, full-color modern maps designed by frequently featured DUNGEON cartographer Christopher West, ready for use in any d20 MODERN campaign. Whether investigating the aquarium, sneaking aboard a luxury yacht, or storming city hall, GMs can now wreak havoc at dozens of detailed locations all over the city (some of which first appeared in POLYHEDRON). To help even further, designers Eric Cagle and Owen K.C. Stephens have added adventure seed ideas, guides for use, and special rules—like how much damage a frozen turkey can really do. –*S.B.*



J!NX, already known for their gamer and hacker-themed designs, has acquired the license to produce official clothing for D&D and all of its affiliated campaign settings. In addition to the clothes currently available, J!NX promises releases of fresh new t-shirt designs every month. Also, do you have a D&D joke or character catch phrase that you think is worth wearing? Anyone who submits a D&D shirt idea to J!NX's monthly fan design contest can win $150 for text gags, $500 if their idea includes print worthy art. So chuck that shirt with the generic silk screen dragon and visit **jinx.com/dnd** to get in on the action. –*J.S.*

NEXT MONTH IN DRAGON #344

30TH ANNIVERSARY
Super-Sized Spectacular Issue!

The Return of Gord
by Gary Gygax and K. R. Bourgoine
Watch your coin purse. Gord the Rogue returns in this tale of thievery and mayhem.

Home and Away Again
by Bruce Heard
Set sail again with Prince Haldemar and the crew of the *Princess Ark*, in this new installment of the classic DRAGON column.

A Dark and Stormy Knight
by Ed Greenwood
Have dinner with the Wizards Three and learn the culinary tastes of Elminster, Mordenkainen, and Rautheene.

Plus a Whole Lot More!
Keith Baker takes us to Dreadhold; EBERRON's Prison Isle, four New Planar Dragons, Ecology of the Dracolich, a visit to Wizards of the Coast R&D, Spellcraft, Bazaar of the Bizarre, Class Acts, Sage Advice, comics, and more.

reported by Shelly Baur, Allan Grohe, Mike Fehlauer, Mike L. Fiegel, and James Sutter

DRAGON FIST

Before there were monks in D&D third edition, there was *Dragon Fist*, a kung-fu action, wuxia-inspired conversion of AD&D by Green Ronin founder Chris Pramas. This month, Green Ronin (**greenronin.com**) returns to that world of hopping vampires, exotic magic, and daredevil martial arts with *Dragon Fist's* newest incarnation, written by Chris Pramas and Tony Lee. With new rules for character generation, magic, and tons of martial arts action, the book also features new cover art by Hong Kong's "King of Comics," Tony Wong. *–J.C.*

DEPTHS IN THE DEPTH

Wherever your subterranean river runs, you'll be able to reconstruct it with Dwarven Forge's new *Cavernous River and Walls Sets*, releasing this month. Stefan Pokorny, founder and master sculptor of Dwarven Forge (**dwarvenforge.com**), offers this fully hand-painted three-dimensional dungeon set, featuring twenty-eight felt-bottomed pieces, including flagstone tiles, a wooden bridge, skull totems, and riverbeds filled with clear resin to provide the illusion of flowing water. Every puddled-drenched title is also segmented into 1-inch grids for use with miniatures of all types. *–M.L.F.*

CLASSIC CRAWL

Need a killer dungeon? Look no further than *Dungeon Crawl Classics #30: Vault of the Dragon Kings* from Goodman Games (**goodmangames.com**). Featured at the Second Annual Dungeon Crawl Classics Open Tournament at Gen Con 2005, this nostalgic 10th-level module by Jason Little is 83%-PC-death-rate-approved. Including a scoring system, pregenerated characters, illustrated player handouts, and a classic cover by fan-favorite D&D artist Erol Otus, *Vault of the Dragon Kings* threatens to challenge both seasoned PCs and bold newcomers alike. *–J.C.*

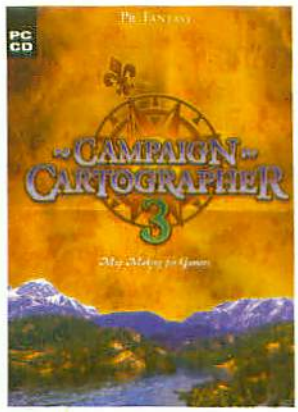


CHART YOUR CAMPAIGN

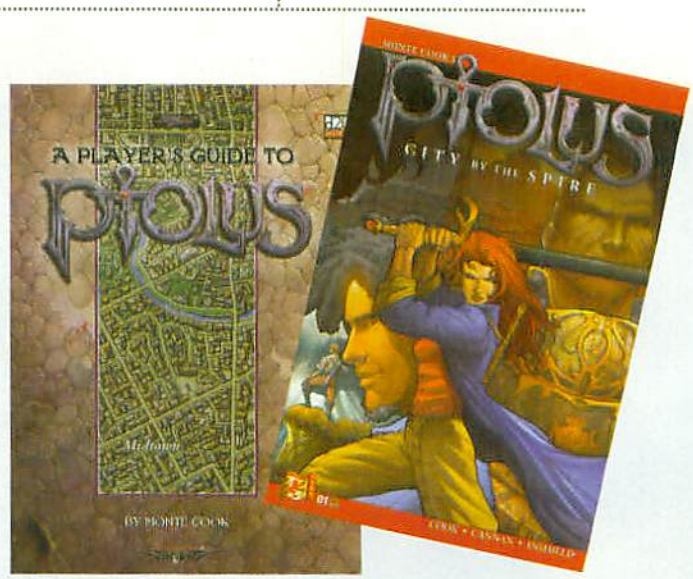
Morose about maps? Cringing over cartography? If your homebrew world on hex paper lacks something next to the FORGOTTEN REALMS' lavish poster panels, give Pro-Fantasy's *Campaign Cartographer 3* a try. Produce detailed depictions in multiple scales, from campaign-spanning world maps to detailed regional maps, from elaborate dungeon-wide mazes to miniatures-sized tactical battlefields. With CC3, you can also import artwork from nearly anywhere on the web, take advantage of more than 900 new included symbols, and share templates with other map-makers. Check it out at **profantasy.com**. *–J.C.*

A PEEK AT PTOLUS

Can't wait for August's massive *Ptolus: Monte Cook's City by the Spire* campaign setting? Then get a taste for the urban epic with the 32-page *Players Guide to Ptolus*. It's available as a free download at **ptolus.com** or in print for $2.99 at game stores.

You can also experience the flavor of Ptolus, Monte Cook's forthcoming campaign world, through the comic book adventures of treasure hunter Sheva Callister. Monte himself pens *Ptolus: City by the Spire*, a six-comic series published by Dabel Brothers Production (**dabelbrothers.com**) and available from your local comic shop. Learn about characters, locales, and plots, all from the living world of Ptolus.

In addition, this month Paizo releases the *City by the Spire* miniatures boxed set, featuring several of the city's best-known residents, including Sheva, the Iron Mage, and Lilith, from the *Ptolus: City by the Spire* comic. Three other individually packaged miniature Ptolus personalities also release this month. Find out about everything Ptolus at both **montecook.com** and **paizo.com**. *–S.B.*



NET FEATS

Need options for your character? Need all of the options? Look no further than your computer and two helpful websites. One, the official Wizards of the Coast site (**wizards.com**), features a database of feats, organizable by name, source, and description. The second is the humongous *Netbook of Feats* (**datadeco.com/nbofeats**). The new version offers 892 feats, combining original fan-written material with OGL content from Wizards of the Coast and other publishers. If you've got an original feat for the book, the *Netbook of Feats* editor Sigfried Trent and his team would love to see it. –*S.B.*

KEEP IT CLEAN

There's a hundred jokes that could go here, none of which end well for gamers, so just give Natural 20 soaps at **seankreynolds.com/soapsbywillow** a look. What dedicated player can resist the allure of a shiny new d20? If you want one contained by these charmingly scented Natural 20 soaps, though, you'll have to scrub first, roll second. Created by Willow Toner—long-time keeper of game designer Sean K Reynolds—each is homemade and totally unique, ready to prove a critical success in your shower and, eventually, at your gaming table. –*J.C.*

GEEK WITH A BOX

Stop eating minis for lunch! Put away the lunch pails and baggies, and show your miniatures some respect by securing them in a customizable carrier from Geek With a Box. These are more than mere cardboard boxes—they're unique storage devices with room for plastic trays, card sheets, rule books, or whatever else you need to play. Each case has foldable handles and employs figure-grabbing foam sheets that hold up to 80 of your favorite miniatures securely in place. With each case's blank white exterior, **geekwithabox.com** has tons of suggestions on how to customize your own unique box. –*M.L.F.*

CONAN, WHAT IS BEST ONLINE?

Due out later this year, *Age of Conan: Hyborian Adventures* (**ageofconan.com**), brings new grit and gore to the world of massively multiplayer online RPGs. The combat system lets players target—and nonconsensually amputate—specific body parts, while an innovative grouping system gives bonuses to your team if you manage to, for example, maintain a shield wall or break an opposing line. Also, in a new twist to the genre, low-level gameplay is an exclusively single-player experience designed to introduce Robert E. Howard's rich and brutal world. Look for an online beta test coming soon. –*M.F.*

THIS MONTH IN DUNGEON #134

Home Under the Range

by Michael Kortes

A community of dwarves is threatened and a breed of giant light-shedding beetles are their only hope. Unfortunately, the PCs must first escort the insects through the Underdark. A D&D adventure for 3rd-level characters.

And Madness Followed

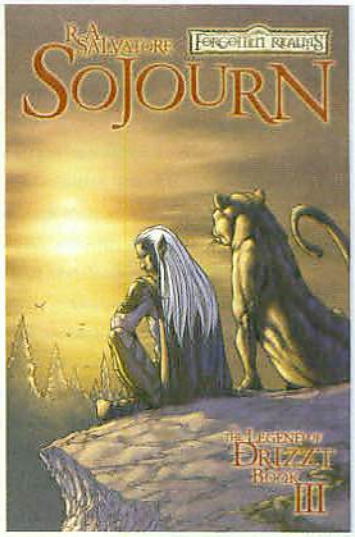
by Matthew Hope

Something vile has transformed the inhabitants of a sleepy rural village into insane monsters. Can the PCs unravel the mystery before a troupe of crazed bards plunges an entire city into the Far Realm? A D&D adventure for 9th-level characters.

Into the Wormcrawl Fissure

by James Jacobs

Dragotha's phylactery has been destroyed or captured, yet the undead dragon still exists. If the PCs are to avert the Age of Worms, they must invade the heartland of Kyuss' power, the Wormcrawl Fissure, and destroy the world's most powerful dracolich before the Wormgod awakens. An Age of Worms Adventure Path scenario for 19th-level characters.



D&D COMICS CONTINUED

Having already impressed D&D fans with their graphic novel adaptation of *Dragons of Autumn Twilight*, Devil's Due Publishing (**devilsdue.net**) is now at work on *Dragons of Winter Night*, the second book in Margaret Weis and Tracey Hickman's classic Dragonlance Chronicles trilogy. The novel presents a darker chapter in the lives of nine heroic companions, which sees them divided and scattered across the world of Krynn. With war looming in the north and dragons returned to the world of mortals, a terrible prophecy is about to come true.

Whereas the adaptation of *Dragons of Autumn Twilight* was published in eight parts (with a trade paperback collection due out this month and a hardcover compilation in July), *Dragons of Winter Night* will be published in four double-sized bimonthly installments, better suited to telling the wintry tale. Fans need not fear, however, for little else will be changing, with adaptor Andrew Dabb and artist Steve Kurth doing *Dragons of Winter Night* just as they adapted *Dragons of Autumn Twilight*. "One thing we're striving for with all of our D&D material is to be consistent," said Mark Powers, Editor of Devil's Due Publishing. "We want the trades to be the best packages possible, and we want each trade to be compatible with its 'sister titles'—so as far as writers and artists are concerned, the creative teams will remain the same."

Consistency is also the name of the game with the forthcoming FORGOTTEN REALMS Icewind Dale Trilogy. Beginning in August with R. A. Salvatore's *The Crystal Shard*, these comics adapt the series that first introduced Drizzt Do'Urden to the world. Telling the tale of the exiled drow and his companions, Wulfgar, Bruenor, and Cattie-Brie, the first novel will be adapted in three double-sized issues, just like the Dark Elf trilogy of *Homeland*, *Exile*, and the forthcoming *Sojourn*. –*M.L.F.*

RPGA REPORT *by Stephen Radney-MacFarland*

Don't look now, but this year's Gen Con Indy is almost upon us. By now, registration is in full swing for August's events, and downtown Indianapolis hotel rooms are filling up. If you're planning on immersing yourself in an entire weekend of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS goodness, you've got to start planning now. But after taking care of a room and badge, your very next stop should be the RPGA.

For those with a competitive streak, take a look at the ever-popular D&D Open Championship. Always exciting and bursting with D&D monsters, traps, and puzzles, and being the Year of Dragons you can guess the nature of this year's challenges, not to mention prizes. If you've never played the D&D Open Championship, bring some trusted gaming companions. It's the only official D&D competitive team tournament, and you'll be pitted against top groups for placing into later rounds, and then compete for top prizes. But don't expect an easy time of it. This year's adventure is penned by infamous designer Mike Mearls, which means it's going to be hard! So study your books and start drilling for dragon encounters now!

Running out of time already? Don't worry, this year we're throwing open the doors to the RPGA event area all night long. We call it Midnight Madness; and not only are we offering a special selection of our daytime games, we're also amending the rules of the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign for this slot, meaning that you can play any regional, as long as you have a DM from that region to run it! Start catching up on your sleep now—you'll need the reserves for later.

Register now at **gencon.com**, and find out more about the full RPGA Gen Con offerings at **rpga.com.**

AL - Nord's Games - 2000 Riverchase Galleria - Hoover, AL 35244 - Nords-games.com - (205) 966-4263

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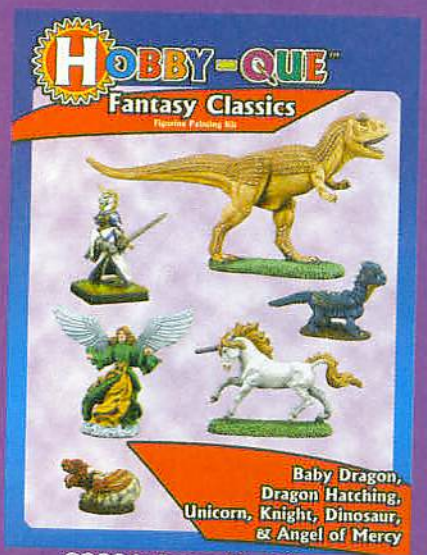

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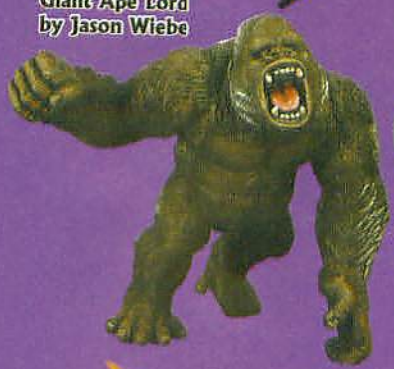

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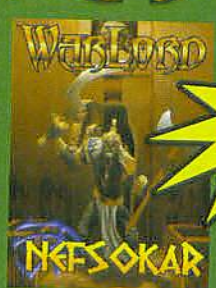

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Take Cover!

Surviving D&D's Masters of Movement

by Hal Maclean
illustrated by Ben Wooten

Terror comes from helplessness. Claws reach out of the floor to snatch at your feet. A shadow momentarily blocks the sun just before an attack. Sinister ripples appear in the deep, dark water. A face leers as you dangle from the cliff edge.

Monsters with superior movement abilities, those able to run, climb, fly, and swim circles around you, represent the greatest of all threats. Attacking when you least expect it, free to retreat and try again should things turn against them, these foes inspire frustration and dread.

It is possible to regain the upper hand, however, or at least to even the odds. This article takes a look at these most terrible of foes and offers tips and strategies to help improve your chances of victory when facing enemies with superior movement abilities.

WHAT LIES BENEATH

In a world where burrowing monsters hunt for prey, every step could be the first on a path leading directly into a creature's gullet. The earth itself, usually so solid, so dependable, might at any moment give way, dropping you into suffocating darkness. Erupting from the depths below, burrowing monsters usually achieve total surprise, and should the battle go against them they remain free to retreat behind the best cover imaginable: miles and miles of earth and stone. When endowed with tremorsense, as most are, these monsters become even more of a threat. Facing foes able to trace the slightest movement back to its source, running away could prove a fatal mistake.

To survive, begin by anticipating the attack. A few successful Listen checks (perhaps augmented by a thieving hat from *Arms and Equipment Guide*) might hint at rumbling in the earth below and give you valuable moments to prepare. If you suspect a burrowing creature lurks beneath your feet, use a *speak with plants* spell to ask trees and other flora about anything moving through their root systems. Similarly, employ tunneling scouts whenever possible. Recruit burrowing creatures by use of *charm monster* or the gnome racial ability to speak with such animals, or make one of your own allies ethereal and have him check for tunnels beneath your feet.

Burrowing monsters own the earth, but generally find air problematic. Spells like *fly* and *air walk* allow you to leave the ground behind, putting burrowers back on the defensive. Use magic items, such as a *carpet of flying*, or cast *levitate* on a platform, log, or similar object to bring your non-spellcasting friends aloft. If you lack even that level of magic, climb a tree, a wall, or to the roof of a nearby building. Do what you must to force the creature to fully emerge from the ground and make it vulnerable to attack.

Remember to try to always stay within the "gray zone" of a monster's reach: close enough to give it the illusion that it can harm you without actually putting yourself in real danger. You need to keep it snapping at you instead of retreating back underground.

If you can't fly or climb, escape into the water. Most burrowing creatures are not aquatic and struggle in water as much as other terrestrial beings. Ideally, you should use magic to move out into or over the water, as boats and ships tend to be ponderously slow—which can spell doom for a fleeing character. Spells such as *water breathing* and *water walk* can quickly get you away from shore and beyond your opponent's reach.

HANGING AROUND

Climbing returns characters to the helplessness of infancy, being forced to crawl about and leaving their backs exposed to a hostile world.

That Shaking Feeling

Remember, tremorsense depends upon movement. If you stay still you leave creatures dependent upon it effectively blinded. Capitalize on this idea: treat such creatures like fish and use motion as bait. Throw objects at a particular spot and when your burrowing foe emerges use your most powerful attacks. Even better, make the lures dangerous. For instance, toss a box with *fire trap* or *glyph of warding* on it so that it explodes when the burrower grabs or swallows it. If unable to stay still, at least use magic to conjure additional targets. The various summon spells, as well as *mount* or a *bag of tricks*, helps confuse the issue. The following creatures from the *Monster Manual* have tremorsense: ankheg, bulette, centipede swarm, delver, monstrous scorpion (all sizes), monstrous spider (all sizes), nightcrawler, phasm, purple worm, remorhaz, spider swarm, thoqqua, umber hulk, and xorn.

Monsters comfortable with climbing put such characters at a significant disadvantage. Whether staying out of reach of ground-based opponents or harassing those trying to scale a wall or cliff face, foes with a climb speed pose a terrible threat.

The only thing worse than a climbing foe who stays just beyond the tip of your sword is one with reach or a ranged attack. In these cases you must adopt a two-fold strategy: First, find ways to frustrate the monster's attacks. Retreat out of range, duck behind cover, use *obscuring mist* to give yourself concealment—whatever you must do to escape its threatened area. Second, find ways to harm your foe even as it climbs. Use ranged attacks, reach weapons, harassment magic like *stinking cloud* and similar tactics to put it at risk. Once you frustrate its ability to harm you and prove that you remain a threat to it, a climbing foe must enter melee, where the advantage can shift back to you.

Avoid actual combat while climbing whenever possible. The peril of falling makes climbing a risky enough proposition on its own; adding in an enemy—especially one more adept at moving around on vertical surfaces—only exacerbates things. If you do find yourself battling a foe while climbing, adopt a conservative strategy focused on survival. Always make your own security and wellbeing your first priority. Ensure your safety with spells like *spider climb* and *levitate*. A *ring of feather falling*, at just 2,200 gp, not only puts your mind at ease when climbing but it also takes much of the sting out of pit traps. Ideally, you should maximize your advantage by developing flight: climbing foes seldom pose much of a threat once you take to the air.

Make a habit of using ropes, pitons, rock hammers, and other climbing gear, anything to give you a bonus on Climb checks or to halt your fall should you slip. Since relying upon this gear leaves you vulnerable to sabotage and makes it easy for your opponents to anticipate your climbing route, you need to take precautions. For instance, cast *magic mouth* on your rope, instructing it to scream terrible threats if anyone tries to cut it. Even if this fails to frighten a saboteur away it should at least give you enough warning to grab onto something else before the rope gets sliced. You could get similar results with *animate rope* or *programmed image*. Warding your pitons and climbing spikes with spells like *explosive runes*, while tempting, leaves you open to the risk of triggering a rock slide or avalanche. Far safer is *sepia snake sigil*, since it presents no danger of an explosion.

When forced to climb, divide the ascent into manageable stages and your group into climbing teams. Rope the members of each climbing team together. This gives them a chance to halt a fall should someone slip and the incentive to check and then double-check one another's equipment. A climbing team makes up the first line of defense in combat as it ensures that a person under attack has at least one ally close at hand to offer immediate assistance.

Splitting the ascent into stages gives your climbing teams frequent chances to rest. It also allows those resting to provide cover fire for other advancing teams should something attack while making the climb. If your climbing area does not seem easily divided into stages, create your own. Use spells like *stone shape* or *fabricate* to create ledges where needed. Magic items like *Nolzur's marvelous pigments* or a *portable hole* (if put up against the wall) create convenient shallow caves. If worse comes to worst, suspend a sturdy tent or sleeping bag from ropes and dangle.

LOOK, UP IN THE SKY

Own the skies, own the battlefield. Flying opponents possess the edge of perspective, allowing them to take in the entire battlefield with a single glance. They enjoy the benefit of operating in three dimensions, effortlessly scaling obstacles, rising to safety if threatened and dropping objects—or opponents—on enemies below. Most importantly, they gain the luxury of mobility, free to choose when, where, and even if, to take the battle to their land-bound foes.

Always make your own safety your first and highest priority. Start with cover and concealment. Spells like *obscuring mist* or items like a *horn of fog* make it much more difficult for an opponent to locate you. You get similar results with mundane solutions like ducking behind brush, smokesticks, or by setting a tree on fire and hiding beneath the wall of rising smoke. Spells like

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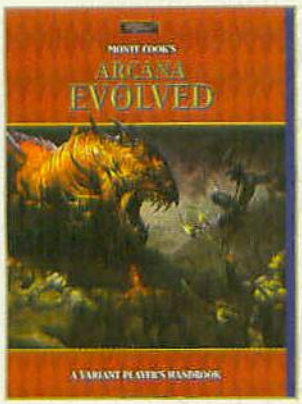

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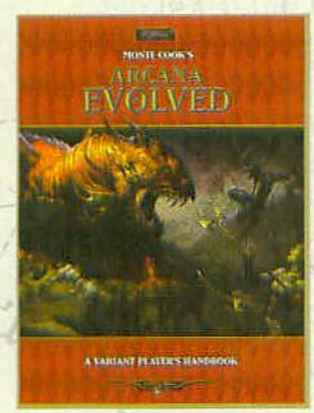

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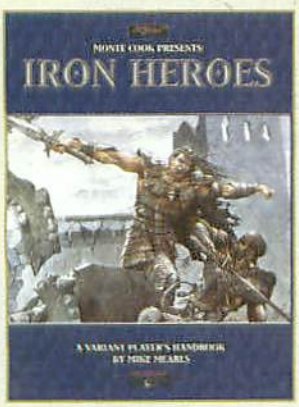

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Cry Freedom

When facing aquatic monsters, never leave home without access to *freedom of movement*. This spell instantly levels the playing field by negating all the combat penalties you usually incur when underwater. Ensure that it is always part of your group's repertoire and make gaining access to it a higher priority than even gaining *water breathing*. Scribe it on scrolls (if your DM permits—or insists, use waterproof materials like bamboo or metal plates instead of paper). The wizard Class Act in DRAGON #332 provides several other alternative (and waterproof) spellbook ideas. Buy or craft magic items like *pearls of the sirens*. At 15,300 gp, the pearl costs only about a third of a *ring of freedom of movement* and also grants *water breathing* and a swim speed.

blindness/deafness and *invisibility* let you hide in different ways.

Whether trees, sand dunes, or glacial moraines, almost all terrain has something suitable for cover. Spells like *fabricate, plant growth,* and *stone shape* allow you to further adapt your surroundings to your needs. If you experience trouble finding cover, use spells like *Leomund's secure shelter* or *meld into stone* and items like *Daern's instant fortress* to create it yourself.

The safest and most prudent tactic when facing flying monsters is to try to knock them out of the sky. Even if gravity fails and they survive the fall, they should prove much easier to deal with once sprawled on the ground. *Hold monster* proves incredibly valuable, as long as the flying foe you face uses wings to fly and isn't borne by magic (as a beholder). Otherwise, you need to rely on damaging or stunning spells with ranges of medium or long. As in most situations, *magic missile* is one of the best spells when facing a flying opponent.

It also helps to join your opponents in the air. Spells like *air walk, fly,* and *gaseous form* permit you to face your foe on his home turf. Remain wary of your opponent's maneuverability class, however, and avoid getting drawn into dogfights you might lose.

Also, always try to make your opponent come to you. Spells like *animal shapes* and *polymorph,* which allow you to take on the form of a creature comfortable in the air, can prove quite handy if circumstances do force you to chase your opponent into the sky. Since safety remains your highest priority, use spells like *summon swarm* (bats) or *insect plague* to enlist flying creatures to take the fight to the air on your behalf.

Remember, most flying opponents must still make contact with you in order to do harm. This gives you plenty of opportunities to hurt them, both as they approach and at the point of contact.

JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT IT WAS SAFE

A little water goes a long way. The sun only reaches the bare surface, leaving the rest shrouded in chill darkness. It pushes against you when you try to move, making you slow, awkward, and helpless against creatures born to the depths. Worst of all, the threat of drowning makes water quite lethal.

Aquatic monsters enjoy numerous advantages when attacking land-based foes from beneath the screen of water. They at least gain improved cover, and that +8 to AC and +4 on Reflex saves can prove decisive. If completely submerged, they gain total cover, making them almost invulnerable to attacks. Additionally, most ranged weapons fired into water take tremendous penalties, thrown weapons are rendered completely useless, and other attacks take a –2 penalty for every 5 feet they travel.

In these situations, you should probably focus on reducing the monster's potential to do you harm. Use spells like *protection from arrows* to counter aquatic archers and *globe of invulnerability* to foil their spellcasters. *Stoneskin* and *fire shield* go a long way toward foiling waterborne monsters with reach, like an aboleth's tentacles. Make the monster waste its attacks while you continue to exploit any opportunities to deal damage to it in return.

Next, begin to chip away at the monster itself. Keep a steady stream of spells like *ray of enfeeblement* or *slow,* which tend to take the fight out of even the most formidable opponent. Tease it, taunt it, harass it. Give it reasons to surrender the advantage water offers and advance to within reach of your spells and weapons. If need be, use spells like *suggestion* or *command* (approach) to make it draw nearer.

Sometimes, an attack against the water itself can prove effective. For instance, use cold attacks like *Otiluke's freezing sphere* to solidify the water. In addition to trapping your opponent in ice, you also gain a relatively stable platform from which to launch your attacks. *Control water* can lower the level of smaller water bodies and create whirlpools in larger ones.

When all else fails, send something into the water to attack your opponent. Spells like *animate dead* and *animate objects* create fearless servants free of the need to draw breath. They not only enable you to harm your foe but also put it on the defensive, forcing it to stop attacking you and fend off your minions. If you lack such magic, never forget that the various *summon monster* and *summon nature's ally* spells may be used to conjure aquatic creatures.

Things get even more difficult when you're forced to face an aquatic monster in its own element. Make not drowning your first priority. A number of spells and magic items

can help you do that, from *water breathing* to a *helm of underwater action* or iridescent spindle *ioun stone*.

Avoid armor and its frequently large penalty on Swim checks. For those dependant on armor, the best strategy is to simply sink to the floor and find firm footing. Wear a weighted belt or a backpack full of rocks to suppress your natural buoyancy. Remember that you take a penalty equal to double your armor check penalty (or your penalty for encumbrance) on Swim checks, which fairly accurately approximates this technique.

The easiest and safest way to fight underwater is to gain a swim speed. *Alter self* gives you the mundane movement capabilities of your new form, including a swim speed if you take the right shape. You gain similar results from the *polymorph* spell, with the added benefit that you may use it to assist your allies. The *cloak of the manta ray* also grants you a swim speed, as well as other abilities useful when battling aquatic monsters.

GHOST OF A CHANCE

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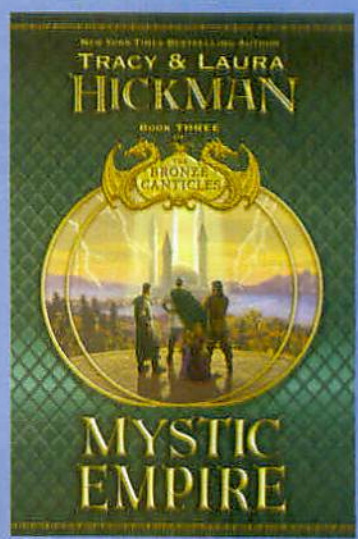

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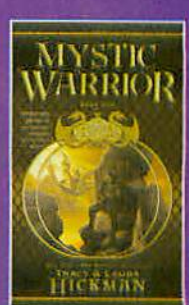

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The most important thing to remember about ethereal monsters is that they still exist, even when on a different plane. Spells like *see invisibility* and *true seeing* detect ethereal foes, and by using the right magic you may breach the borders of reality to harm them before they have the opportunity to strike at you. Force effects, like *magic missile* and *spiritual weapon*, affect ethereal creatures normally, so make heavy use of these kinds of spells. Gaze attacks also cross the narrow planar boundary, giving you a chance to use items like *eyes of doom*.

Never forget, once you develop the ability to detect and harm an ethereal opponent the advantage tilts toward you. It must make the shift from one plane to another if it hopes to harm you. This usually requires a move or even a standard action, delaying it slightly and giving you more opportunities to defeat it. *Dimensional anchor*, which among other things bars spells like *ethereal jaunt*, can render an ethereal foe helpless and unable to make the transfer to attack you.

A MATTER OF SUBSTANCE

For incorporeal foes, the material world only exists when they want it to. Free to lurk inside solid objects, they can emerge when you least expect it, laughing at your futile sword thrusts even as their own attacks effortlessly pass through even the thickest armor. Gifted with this near invulnerability, their capacity to cause harm seems matched only by their malice.

At first glance, running away from a creature able to move through solid objects and float in any direction seems nearly impossible. Spells like *teleport* and *plane shift* remain your most reliable means of escape. Keep in mind, however, that most of these creatures are undead and frequently bound to a particular place or are vulnerable to sunlight. Often, the chase ends up as a sprint, not a marathon. Use magic like *dimension door* or *expeditious retreat* to give yourself the momentary edge you need to scramble to a place beyond your enemy's reach.

Most physical attacks pass harmlessly through incorporeal foes, making them exceedingly frustrating opponents. Even magic weapons and spells have only a 50% chance of affecting them. Their only real vulnerabilities are ghost touch weapons and force effects like *spiritual weapon* and the ever-useful *magic missile*.

If you lack such quality, aim for quantity. Find ways to increase the number of attacks you make each round to overwhelm that

Blind Man's Bluff

The most important thing to remember about incorporeal foes is that their ability to move through solid objects does not allow them to see through them too. While inside a wall or hiding in the floor they are blind. Their bonus on Listen checks when inside objects usually allows them to find you, but to avoid that 50% miss chance they must first poke their head out of the wall and pinpoint your location. This gives you vital seconds to react and prepare yourself. Take further advantage of this flaw by equipping yourself with a *ring of x-ray vision* or something similar. This permits you to observe their approach, and ambush them at the point of first contact.

50% chance of an attack failing. Use spells like *haste* on your melee fighters and sprinkle the fifty pieces of ammunition enhanced by a *greater magic weapon* spell among your cohorts and followers.

Since incorporeal foes tend to rely upon touch attacks, often bolstered by level and energy draining effects, use ranged attacks whenever possible. In melee, start by girding your allies with spells like *death ward*. A *sanctuary* spell used in conjunction with a *wand of lesser restoration* allows a cleric to move about the battlefield in relative safety, restoring ability damage as he goes. Once again, summoning spells prove invaluable by not only bringing in extra combatants to overwhelm that 50% chance of an attack failing (even though only half of your attacks hit, if you increase the number of attacks you increase the number of hits) but also extra targets to spread out the effects of an incorporeal opponent's special attacks.

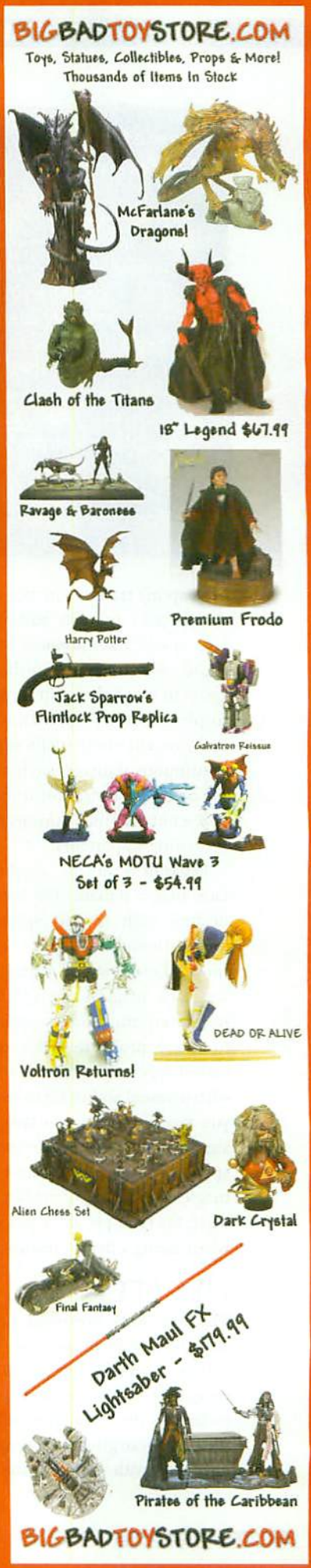
Incorporeal foes can brush past most forms of defense. Their claws reach right through armor and shields, but ghost touch armor and force effects thwart them. *Mage armor* should be your first line of defense against incorporeal foes, and you should use it even on those wearing physical armor. While incorporeal foes ignore most physical defenses, you can still use spells like *protection from evil* to create defensive barriers and *cat's grace* to beef up an ally's agility.

THERE AND BACK AGAIN

Creatures able to teleport are never more then a single step away from home—theirs or yours. Able to disappear, regroup, and return specifically prepared to make your life miserable, they can leave you gnashing your teeth in helpless fury. Even the least intelligent ones, those who simply use their power to gain an edge in maneuverability, leave you constantly at risk of becoming flanked or subject to lethal ambush.

Start by looking for ways to trap them in one place. Eliminate their ability to teleport and the odds instantly shift back in your favor. Recognize the potential of spells like *dimensional anchor* and *dimensional lock*, and keep a few of these handy on scrolls, just in case. Using a different strategy, *antimagic field* suppresses spell-like abilities, including *teleport*. Keep in mind though, while the spell cancels out magic weapons it does not always negate damage reduction, meaning a creature like a fiend might willingly trade its teleport ability for you losing the benefits of your holy weapons.

If you lack the means to trap teleporting creatures at your location, look for ways to narrow down their options when coming back. Both *teleport* and *dimension door* require an open space to work. A *web* or *wall of ice* fills up a lot of open space, and makes it easier to keep an eye (and



Something's Different

Teleport demands a clear mental image of the intended destination. If you change the look of a location you might affect the familiarity category of the target roll, perhaps causing your foe to return in midair or in a different location entirely. Illusions like *false vision* and *hallucinatory terrain* play a major role when modifying an area, as do spells like *plant growth* and *transmute rock to mud.*

a weapon) trained on the areas in which your foe can still reappear. Use spells like *summon swarm* or *Evard's black tentacles* on those open spots to make the return even more unpleasant for your enemies. Similarly, area of effect spells which deal continuous damage, such as *wall of fire* or *blade barrier,* not only occupy space but also make things dicey for returning opponents.

Regardless of the creatures you face, magic remains the best way of dealing with myriad special abilities. Although expensive, it is the most efficient way of staying alive. If you lack magical strength, though, numerous mundane solutions exist to many problems. Of course, the easiest way to prepare for a monster with unusual abilities is to know what you face and when you face it. Foresight can let you prepare the correct spells and purchase the most relevant magic items. A *ring of freedom of movement,* for example, does you no good when facing a flying creature.

NEW FEATS

The new feats presented here offer additional ways of avoiding or combating climbing, flying, and swimming foes. While somewhat risky and foolhardy, the techniques offered by these feats can give you a leg up against creatures with extraordinary senses, superior and unusual movement abilities, and supernatural existences.

DEFENSIVE CLIMBER [GENERAL]

You can climb without dropping your guard.

Prerequisites: Dex 15, Athletic.

Benefit: You can move freely enough to avoid some blows while climbing. By accepting a –10 penalty on your Climb check, you can retain your Dexterity bonus to AC while climbing.

In addition, you do not need to make a Climb check when you take damage while climbing.

Normal: When climbing you lose your Dexterity bonus to AC unless you take a –20 penalty on the check (see page 97 of *Complete Adventurer*), and you must make a Climb check every time you take damage.

MASTER SWIMMER [GENERAL]

You can swim while heavily laden with a reduced risk of drowning.

Prerequisites: Str 15, Athletic.

Benefit: When using the Swim skill while wearing armor, you only take the normal armor check penalty and encumbrance penalty on your Swim check (see pages 123 and 162 of the *Player's Handbook*).

Normal: Swim checks are subject to double the normal armor check penalty and encumbrance penalty.

QUIET FEET [GENERAL]

You can move in such a way as to avoid making vibrations.

Prerequisites: Dex 15, Stealthy.

Benefit: You can avoid detection by creatures with tremorsense.

As long as you move at no more than one-half of your normal movement speed, you cannot be detected by tremorsense. You move so deliberately that for the purposes of that ability you are not considered to be in contact with the ground. This feat does not benefit you when attempting to avoid tremorsense underwater. If you make an attack while using this feat, you can be detected as normal.

A creature with other means of perceiving you can still use them to detect you as normal.

Normal: Creatures with tremorsense can detect any creature in contact with the ground.

SUPPRESS PRESENCE [GENERAL]

You can lessen the outward signs of your existence.

Prerequisites: Dex 15, Stealthy.

Benefit: You can avoid detection by creatures with blindsense.

By using the Hide skill, you can avoid the notice of creatures with blindsense. Creatures with this ability must make a Spot or Listen check (as proves appropriate to the creature) to detect you while you are hiding within range of their blindsense, just as they would if they were sighted or didn't have this ability. You still require cover to disguise your presence and hide from such creatures.

A creature with other means of perceiving you can still use them to detect you as normal.

Normal: Creatures with blindsense do not need to make Spot or Listen checks to detect creatures.

TOUCHED BY ETHER [GENERAL]

You are connected to the intangible threads of existence that lie beyond the Material Plane.

Prerequisite: Cha 13.

Benefit: Something about you makes it difficult for incorporeal creatures to see you clearly. When on the Material Plane, you have concealment from incorporeal creatures (20% miss chance).

See invisibility does not counteract this effect, but *true seeing* does.

An incorporeal creature that cannot see the subject ignores this effect (although fighting an unseen opponent carries penalties of its own; see page 151 of the *Player's Handbook*).

This feat has no effect on corporeal or ethereal creatures.

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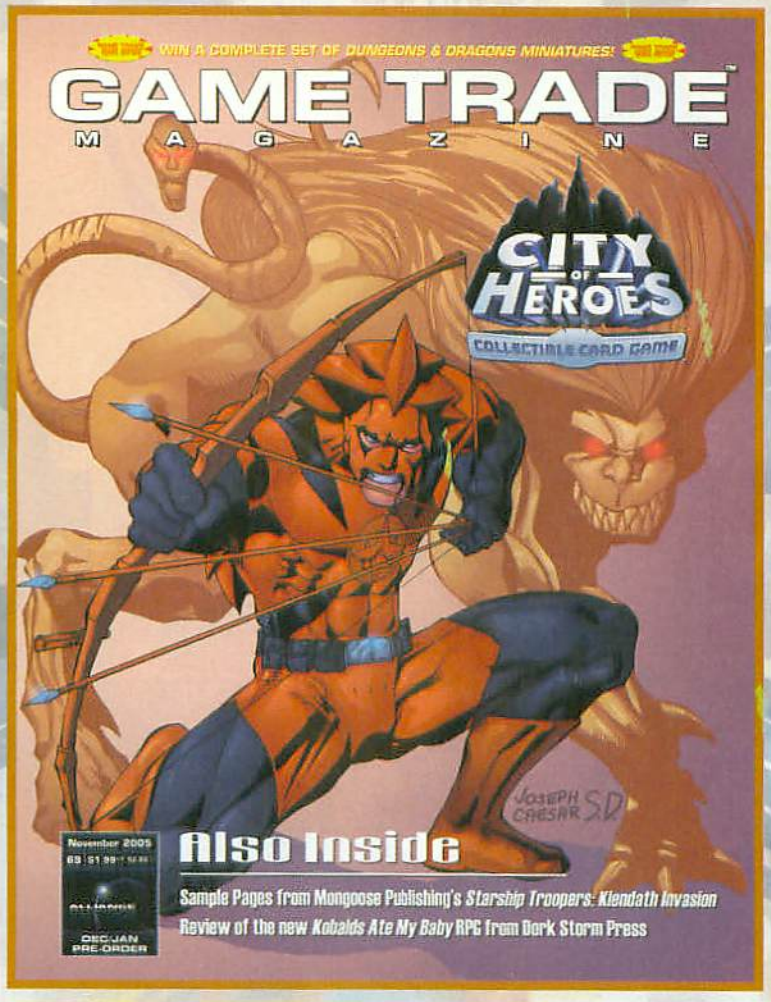
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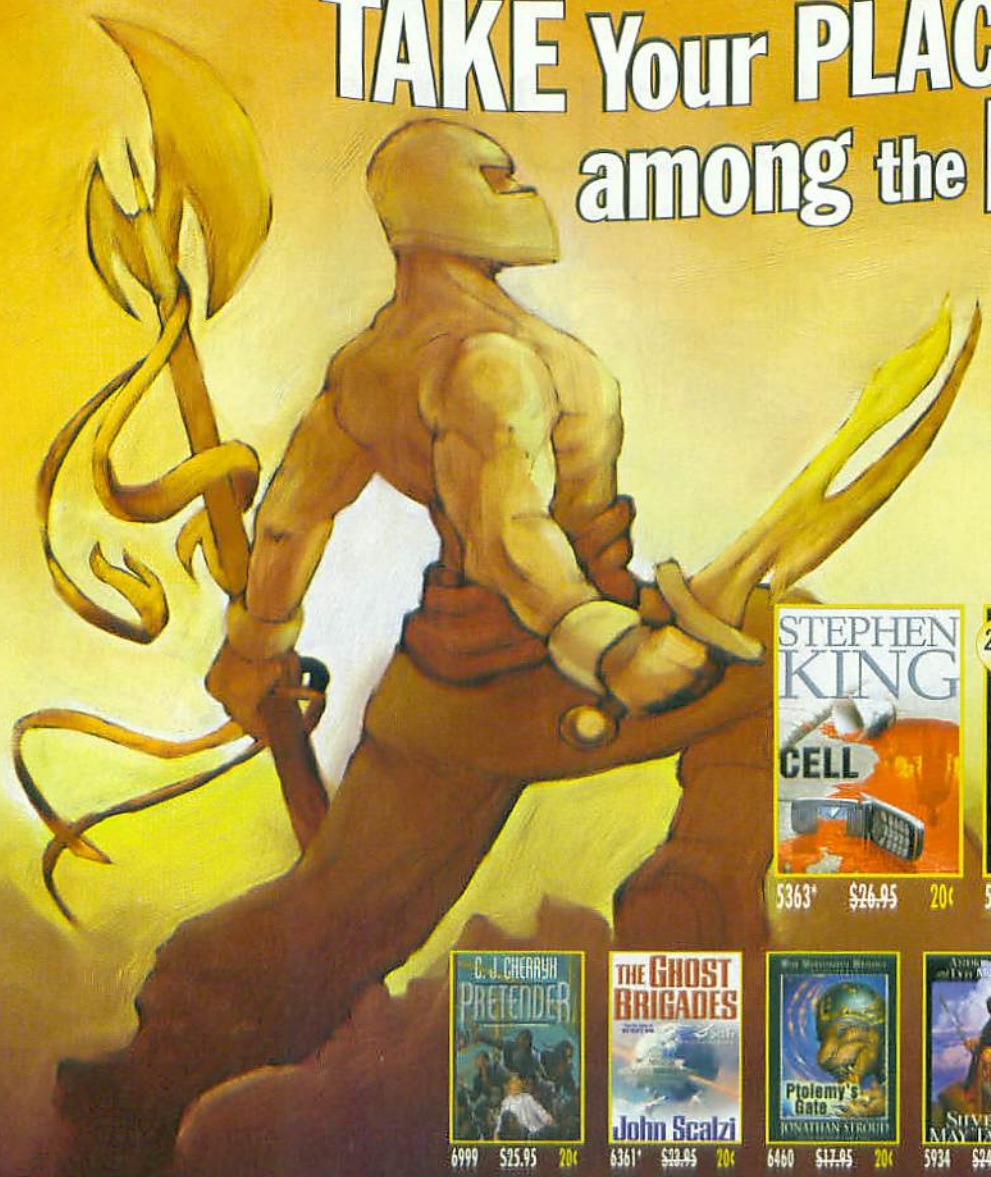

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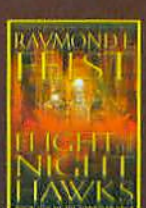

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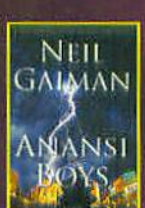

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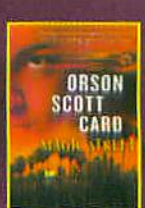

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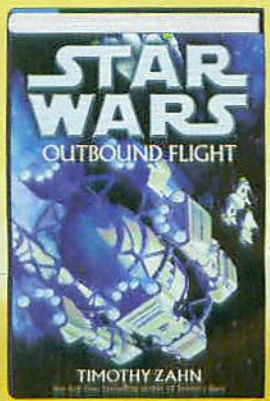

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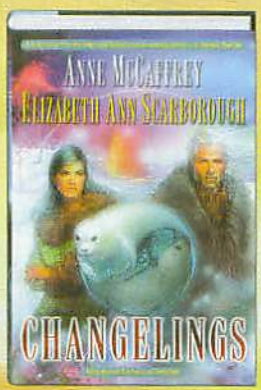

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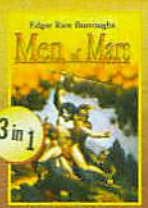

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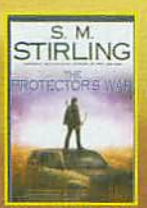

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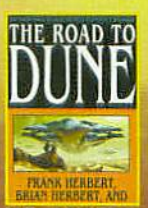

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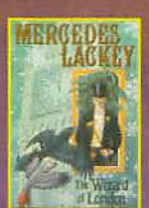

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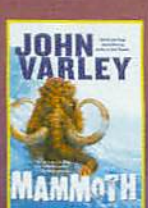

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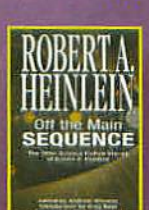

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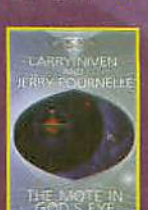

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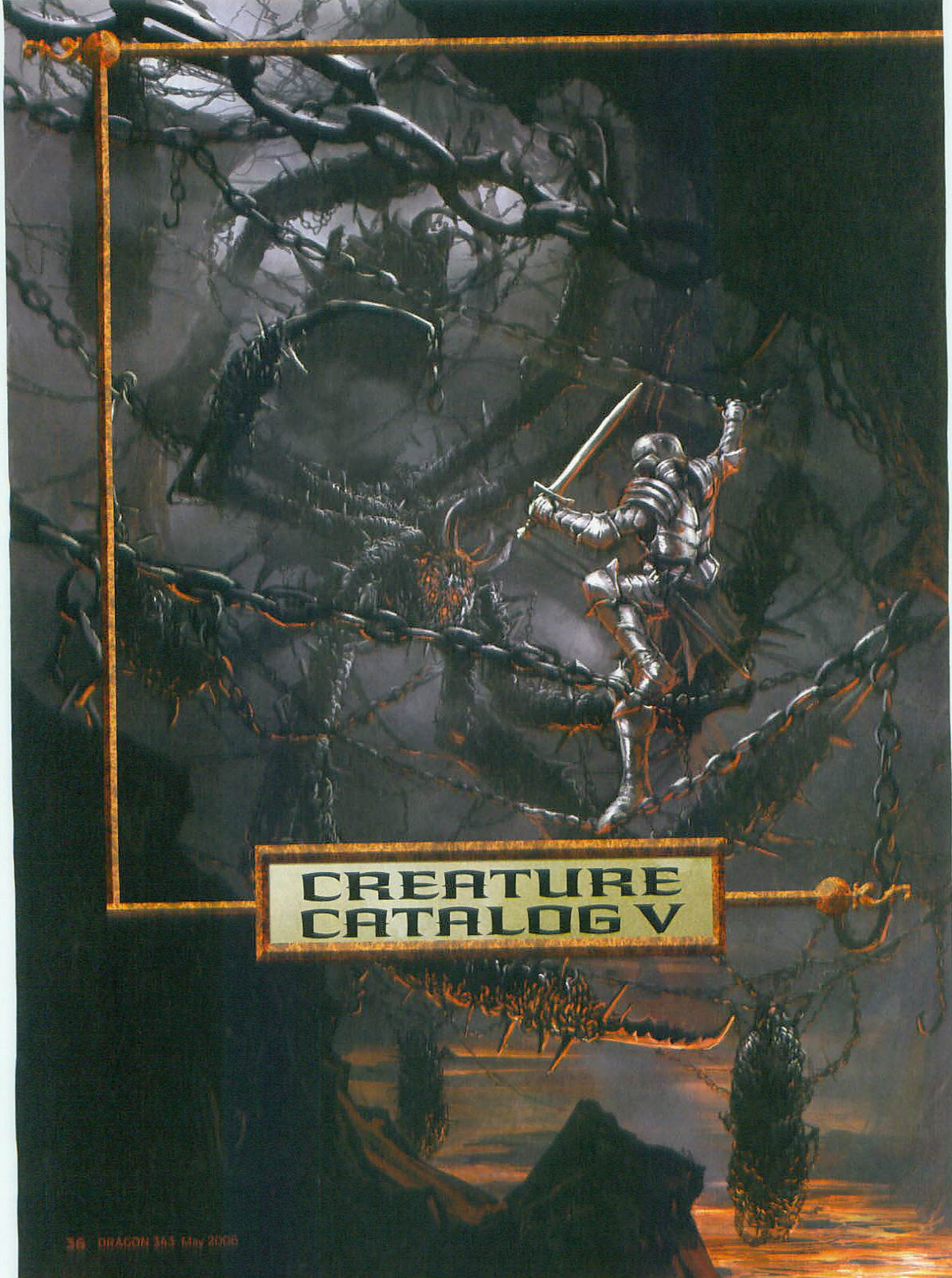
CREATURE
CATALOG V

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Credits

Wolfgang Baur: *Golem, rune; white hart*
Nicholas Herold: *Chupacabra*
Nicholas Hudson: *Gray shiver; hellchain weaver*
Jake Manley: *Dragon, hex; dragon, tome*
Sean K Reynolds: *Living wall; malfera; norker; nuckalavee*
Nich Thorburn: *Warturtle*

illustrated by Ben Wooten and Steve Ellis

CHUPACABRA

Small Monstrous Humanoid
Hit Dice: 3d8+9 (22 hp)
Initiative: +5
Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares)
Armor Class: 19 (+1 size, +5 Dex, +3 natural), touch 16, flat-footed 19
Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+5
Attack: Claw +8 melee (1d4+2)
Full Attack: 2 claws +8 melee (1d4+2) and bite +3 melee (1d4+1)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Blood drain, improved grab
Special Qualities: Camouflage, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent, uncanny dodge
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +5
Abilities: Str 14, Dex 20, Con 17, Int 9, Wis 15, Cha 8
Skills: Hide +19, Jump +16, Move Silently +7, Spot +4
Feats: Improved Grapple, Weapon Finesse
Environment: Warm plains
Organization: Solitary, pair, pack (3–6), or horde (10–20)
Challenge Rating: 3
Treasure: None
Alignment: Usually neutral evil
Advancement: 4–6 HD (Small), 7–9 HD (Medium)
Level Adjustment: +5

This small, bestial humanoid has large red eyes, long claws, and needlelike fangs. Its furred body has a row of spines along its back, and its legs are strong and poised to leap.

Chupacabras are small, savage creatures that feed solely on mammalian blood. They are also known as "goat-suckers" for their penchant for preying on livestock.

After sneaking into civilized land, a pack of chupacabras can drain entire herds of cows, goats, or sheep dry in a matter of days. In addition, some chupacabras have developed a taste for humanoids, pouncing on children, the elderly, and any other victim generally incapable of putting up a fight. Halfling communities frequently fall victim to these creatures, as halflings are typically weaker and slower than many other humanoids. Despite their intelligence, chupacabras possess no culture, merely a primative cunning and skill at hunting.

Rumor has it that a breed of chupacabra has grown thin membranous wings and is capable of flight. Such creatures are identical to normal chupacabras, but have lost the racial bonus to Jump checks and instead have a fly speed of 40 feet (poor manueverability).

Chupacabras stand about 3 feet tall and weigh 40 pounds. They do not speak, but some show evidence of understanding Common.

COMBAT

Chupacabras prefer to attack from hiding, grappling their prey and draining blood as soon as possible. Once gorged on blood, they retreat to digest their meal. If outnumbered, they readily flee, returning later with a larger pack to deal with their foes.

Blood Drain (Ex): A chupacabra drains blood for 1d4 points of Constitution damage each round it maintains a pin. A chupacabra can feed on 12 points of Constitution before it can feed no more, growing bloated and sluggish. Treat a gorged chupacabra as fatigued until it has a chance to rest.

Improved Grab (Ex): In order to use this ability, a chupacabra must hit a Medium or smaller opponent with a claw attack. It can then make a grapple check as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If the chupacabra pins its opponent, it can drain blood.

Camouflage (Ex): Chupacabras can change their coloration to blend in with their surroundings, gaining a +10 bonus on all Hide checks. In addition, they can hide without cover or concealment.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): A chupacabra retains its Dexterity bonus to Armor Class when flat-footed.

Skills: A chupacabra gains a +8 racial bonus on Jump checks.

DRAGON, ARCANE

Sages have long hypothesized a link between the magic of dragons and the development of spellcasting. They point to the obvious ease with which dragons learn even the most obscure magic, and the close link between draconic blood and sorcerous ability. The dragons, for their part, remain notoriously cryptic and tight-lipped with the shorter-lived races. Why spoil a perfectly good legend about your own magical power?

Some have found it strange, however, that the supposed creators of arcane magic, the first teachers of mystical lore, are only initiates at its use. Only the most powerful metallic dragons, the golds and the silvers, can, in thousands of years of life, approach the spells some humanoids learn in less than a century. Compared to the power of the dragons' fangs, claws, and terrible breath weapons, draconic magic seems like little more than dabbling.

The truth of the matter reinforces a lesson adventurers have learned and relearned countless times through the ages: do not underestimate dragons. Ever.

The bulk of dragonkind follows a physical route to power: their minds are quick and their spells mighty, but nowhere near as potent as their natural attacks and deadly breath. A few breeds, however, emphasize the power of the mind instead. These arcane dragons humble an elven sorcerer as easily as a red or bronze dragon might bring down a human knight. Cloaked in even greater mystery than the other dragon breeds, arcane dragons are rarely seen, but their influence on the magical world is great.

COMBAT

Arcane dragons prefer magical combat to physical, as their minds are strong, but their bodies are comparatively weak. Even the youngest approach genius intelligence, so they make good use of their strengths (spells and maneuverability) and never fail to take advantage of the surrounding terrain in combat. Most arcane dragons prefer to weaken their foes with numerous spells and their breath weapon to even the field before engaging in any sort of melee combat.

Arcane dragons possess all the standard true dragon traits (see page 68 of the *Monster Manual*), plus they gain the following special qualities:

Alternate Form (Su): An acrane dragon can assume another form 3 times per day as a standard action. Each arcane dragon can assume the form of any animal or humanoid creature of size Medium or smaller.

Graceful Flight (Ex): Arcane dragons have thin, frail wings, yet they soar through the air with effortless grace. While slower than many other dragons, arcane dragons fly with good maneuverability no matter their size.

Physical Frailty (Ex): Arcane dragons have shorter limbs and weaker natural weapons than other breeds, and are far less suited to physical combat. When determining the type and damage dealt by their natural attacks, treat arcane dragons as if they were one size category smaller than they actually are (minimum Tiny), and subtract 5 feet from the reach of all claw and wing attacks with a reach of 10 feet or more.

HEX DRAGON

Dragon (Earth)
Environment: Any forest and marsh or underground
Organization: Wyrmling, very young, young, juvenile, and young adult: solitary or clutch (2–5); adult, mature adult, old, very old, ancient, wyrm, or great wyrm: solitary, pair, or family (1–2 and 2–5 offspring)
Challenge Ratings: Wyrmling 3; very young 4; young 6; juvenile 8; young adult 10; adult 12; mature adult 15; old 17; very old 19; ancient 20; wyrm 21; great wyrm 24
Treasure: Triple standard
Alignment: Usually neutral evil
Advancement: Wyrmling 5–6 HD; very young 8–9 HD; young 11–12 HD; juvenile 14–15 HD; young adult 17–18 HD; adult 20–21 HD; mature adult 23–24 HD; old 26–27 HD; very old 29–30 HD; ancient 32–33 HD; wyrm 35–36 HD; great wyrm 38+ HD
Level Adjustment: Wyrmling +4; very young +5; young +5; juvenile +6; others —

The dragon's scales ripple with eldritch might, with faint glowing runes pulsing in time. Deep purple in color, the dragon's horns corkscrew above a pair of cunning emerald eyes.

Hex dragons are cruel manipulators infamous for their love of corruption, betrayal, and decay. Many conspire with undead creatures, either as allies or overlords. From the depths of caverns, dark forests, and fetid swamps they spin webs of deception and temptation, luring the unsuspecting with promises of magical lore and power. Few of their pawns survive such encounters and fewer still ever suspect a dragon was behind their dark bargains.

Hex dragons have long, segmented bodies and a multitude of small but needle-sharp teeth. A pair of emerald eyes stare out from sunken pits in their heads, with corkscrewing horns rising from their crown. When young, their bodies are pale and fleshy like maggots, but as they age their skin darkens and their rolls of fat give way to muscle, until by adulthood they are lean and strong. Shortly after hatching, hex dragons begin to develop their telling marks, dozens of small runes that appear across their scales. As they age, these runes grow brighter and brighter, burning with an eldritch fire in their later years. Their voices are high-pitched, melodious, and sweet as poisoned honey.

Younger hex dragons lair in large huts constructed by charmed or otherwise coerced servants far out in the wilderness, lavishly furnished despite their isolated locales and decorated with death imagery. As the dragons age, they either enslave a larger workforce to construct even grander palaces (some eventually growing to resemble small cities in the middle of nowhere) or they find large natural caverns underground and have their slaves carve suitably ostentatious frescos and pilasters into the walls. Either way, hex dragon lairs are hellish places filled with strange odors, smoking vats and braziers, pickled specimen jars, and mummified corpses.

Like most true dragons, hex dragons can eat almost anything. When given a choice, however, they are quite picky—even ritualistic—about their food, some going so far as to only eat specific organs from specific creatures during specific phases of the moon.

COMBAT

Hex dragons scorn a fair fight. One might try to weaken its foes by sending in dominated allies or waves of undead, then fly in and blast the survivors with poison and spells from above. Another might use its magic to deceive enemies into attacking each other, making liberal use of enchantment spells and its alternate form ability. A third might follow a party in the guise of a harmless animal for weeks before ambushing its prey at the perfect moment, using *mass hold person* to force some of the party to watch helplessly while the rest are leisurely butchered.

Even when injured or killed, hex dragons are dangerous foes and the curses they bestow when enraged or dying are the stuff of legends.

Breath Weapon (Su): A hex dragon has one type of breath weapon, a line of putrid venom. All within the area of effect suffer the listed amount of Constitution damage on failed Fortitude saves. As with normal poisons, another save against the same DC is required a minute later to avoid suffering the same Constitution damage again.

Vile Resistances (Ex): Hex dragons receive a +4 bonus on saves versus death effects, enchantment spells, and spells and effects that deal negative energy damage. They are immune to disease and poison.

Retributive Curse (Su): Hex dragons have learned to channel their pain and anger into terrible retributive magic; many foes who succeed in wounding a hex dragon find themselves wishing they could take back the blow. On any round in which a hex dragon is injured (taking hit point or ability damage), the dragon may curse one of the opponents who injured it as a free action. The effects of this curse increase as the dragon ages:

Sickness: Target is sickened for 1d4 rounds.

Agony: Target is crippled by agonizing pain (treat as nauseated) for 1d4 rounds.

Blindness: Target is permanently blinded.

Insanity: Target becomes permanently confused, as per the spell *insanity*.

Oblivion: Target is obliterated (as if affected by a *sphere of annihilation*).

A successful Will save negates the effect. A hex dragon may bestow curses from younger age categories, if it so chooses. The save DC against this curse is 10 + 1/2 the dragon's HD + the dragon's Charisma modifier.

Should a hex dragon ever be killed or mortally wounded (reduced to negative hit points), it reflexively unleashes a death curse against all creatures within a radius equal to 10 feet per age category. All creatures within the area must save as above or suffer the effects of this retributive curse.

Other Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): At will—*deathwatch* (wyrmling or older), 3/day—*suggestion* (very young or older); 1/day—*geas/quest* (young adult or older), *hold person, mass* (old or older), *wail of the banshee* (wyrm or older).

MATURE ADULT HEX DRAGON CR 15

NE Huge dragon (earth)

Init +4; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvison 120 ft., keen senses; Listen +31, Spot +31,

Aura frightful presence (210 ft. radius, DC 27)

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Infernal, Orc, Undercommon

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AC 28, touch 8, flat-footed 28

hp 231 (22 HD); **DR** 10/magic

Immune disease, paralysis, poison, sleep

SR 20

Fort +17, **Ref** +13, **Will** +19, +4 versus death effects, enchantments, and negative energy

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Spd 40 ft. (8 squares), fly 100 ft. (good), burrow 40 ft.

Melee bite +24 (2d6+4) and
2 claws +22 (1d8+2) and
2 wings +22 (1d6+2) and
tail slap +22 (1d8+6)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with tail, 15 ft. with bite)

Base Atk +22; **Grp** +34

Atk Options Cleave, Flyby Attack, Power Attack, Snatch

Special Actions breath weapon, retributive curse (sickness, agony, or blindness, DC 27)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 11th, +20 ranged touch, the following plus all enchantment, necromancy, and spells from the Knowledge domain)

5th (5/day)—*baleful polymorph* (DC 21), *cone of cold* (DC 21)

4th (7/day)—*dimension door, Evard's black tentacles, greater invisibility*

3rd (7/day)—*dispel magic, fireball* (DC 19), *protection from energy, slow* (DC 19)

2nd (8/day)—*glitterdust* (DC 18), *mirror image, misdirection, scorching ray, web* (DC 18)

1st (8/day)—*grease* (DC 17), *mage armor, protection from good, shocking grasp, true strike*

0 (6/day)—*acid splash, arcane mark, dancing lights, detect magic, flare* (DC 16), *ghost sound, prestidigitation, read magic, resistance*

Spell-like Abilities (CL 22nd)

at will—*deathwatch*

3/day—*suggestion* (DC 27)

1/day—*geas/quest*

Abilities Str 19, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 18, Wis 22, Cha 23

SQ alternate form, graceful flight, physical frailty, vile resistances

Feats Cleave, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Snatch, Wingover

Skills Concentration +29, Diplomacy +33, Intimidate +31, Listen +31, Knowledge (arcane) +29, Knowledge (history) +29, Search +29, Sense Motive +31, Spot +31, Spellcraft +31

Breath Weapon (Su): 100-ft. line, contact poison, Fortitude DC 25, initial and secondary damage 1d10 Con

HEX DRAGONS BY AGE

Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha	Base Attack/ Grapple	Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Frightful Presence DC
Wyrmling	S	4d12 (26)	9	10	11	10	14	15	+4/–1	+4	+4	+4	+6	1d4 (12)	—
Very young	M	7d12 (45)	11	10	11	12	16	17	+7/+7	+7	+5	+5	+8	1d6 (13)	—
Young	M	10d12+10 (75)	11	10	13	12	16	17	+10/+10	+10	+8	+7	+10	1d6 (16)	—
Juvenile	L	13d12+13 (97)	13	10	13	14	18	19	+13/+18	+13	+9	+8	+12	1d8 (17)	—
Young adult	L	16d12+32 (136)	15	10	15	14	18	19	+16/+22	+17	+12	+10	+14	1d8 (20)	22
Adult	H	19d12+57 (180)	17	10	17	16	20	21	+19/+30	+20	+14	+11	+16	1d10 (22)	24
Mature adult	H	22d12+88 (231)	19	10	19	18	22	23	+22/+34	+24	+17	+13	+19	1d10 (25)	27
Old	H	25d12+100 (262)	21	10	19	20	24	25	+25/+38	+28	+18	+14	+21	2d6 (26)	29
Very old	H	28d12+140 (322)	23	10	21	22	26	27	+28/+42	+32	+21	+16	+24	2d6 (29)	32
Ancient	G	31d12+155 (356)	25	10	21	24	28	29	+31/+50	+34	+22	+17	+26	2d8 (30)	34
Wyrm	G	34d12+204 (425)	27	10	23	26	30	31	+34/+54	+38	+25	+19	+29	2d8 (33)	37
Great wyrm	G	37d12+259 (499)	29	10	25	28	32	33	+37/+58	+42	+27	+20	+31	4d6 (35)	39

HEX DRAGON ABILITIES BY AGE

Age	Speed	Initiative	AC	Special Abilities	Caster Level*	SR
Wyrmling	20 ft., fly 60 ft. (good), burrow 20 ft.	0	13 (+1 size, +2 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 13	Deathwatch, retributive curse (sickness), vile resistances	—	—
Very young	30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good), burrow 30 ft.	0	15 (+5 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 15	*Suggestion*	1st	—
Young	30 ft., fly 80 ft. (good), burrow 30 ft.	0	18 (+8 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 18	Retributive curse (agony)	3rd	12
Juvenile	40 ft., fly 80 ft. (good), burrow 40 ft.	0	20 (–1 size, +11 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 20	DR 5/magic	5th	14
Young adult	40 ft., fly 80 ft. (good), burrow 40 ft.	0	23 (–1 size, +14 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 23	*Geas/quest*	7th	16
Adult	40 ft., fly 80 ft. (good), burrow 40 ft.	0	25 (–2 size, +17 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 25	Retributive curse (blindness)	9th	18
Mature adult	40 ft., fly 100 ft. (good), burrow 40 ft.	0	28 (–2 size, +20 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 28	DR 10/magic	11th	20
Old	40 ft., fly 100 ft. (good), burrow 40 ft.	0	31 (–2 size, +23 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 31	*Hold person, mass*	13th	22
Very old	40 ft., fly 100 ft. (good), burrow 40 ft.	0	34 (–2 size, +26 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 34	Retributive curse (insanity)	15th	24
Ancient	40 ft., fly 100 ft. (good), burrow 40 ft.	0	35 (–4 size, +29 natural), touch 6, flat-footed 35	DR 15/magic	17th	26
Wyrm	40 ft., fly 120 ft. (good), burrow 40 ft.	0	38 (–4 size, +32 natural), touch 6, flat-footed 38	*Wail of the banshee*	19th	28
Great wyrm	40 ft., fly 120 ft. (good), burrow 40 ft.	0	41 (–4 size, +35 natural), touch 6, flat-footed 41	Retributive curse (oblivion)	21st**	30

* *Hex dragons automatically know all enchantment and necromancy spells on the sorcerer spell list. They can also cast spells from the Knowledge cleric domain as sorcerer spells.*

** *Grants no more spells known or spells per day than a level 20 sorcerer, but improves spells with effects depending on caster level.*

TOME DRAGON

Dragon (Air)
Environment: Any mountain
Organization: Wyrmling, very young, young, juvenile, and young adult: solitary or clutch (2–5); adult, mature adult, old, very old, ancient, wyrm, or great wyrm: solitary, pair, library (2-5), or family (1–2 and 2–5 offspring)
Challenge Ratings: Wyrmling 3; very young 5; young 7; juvenile 10; young adult 13; adult 16; mature adult 18; old 20; very old 22; ancient 23; wyrm 25; great wyrm 26
Treasure: Triple standard
Alignment: Usually lawful neutral
Advancement: Wyrmling 4–5 HD; very young 7–8 HD; young 10–11 HD; juvenile 13–14 HD; young adult 16–17 HD; adult 19–20 HD; mature adult 22–23 HD; old 25–26 HD; very old 28–29 HD; ancient 31–32 HD; wyrm 34–35 HD; great wyrm 37+ HD
Level Adjustment: Wyrmling +5; very young +5; young +6; juvenile +7; others —

With a mane of fine white hair framing its wise face, this dragon's many hued scales reflect light in shimmering patterns. Its long tail ends in a wide fin, not unlike some great fish.

Tome dragons are guardians and gatherers of lore. The greatest of the dragons in terms of sheer spellcasting power, they specialize in conjuration and divination magic. Many spend whole centuries researching such arcane mysteries as planar conjunctions, outsider ecology, fate, destiny, and the flow of time itself. Individually or in small cabals, they search for the source of all magic and develop powers of spellcraft and foresight that rival those of the deities. Extraplanar excursions are frequent, especially for older tome dragons, and the most ancient are known to move about using astral projections more often than with their physical bodies. Ever sagacious, tome dragons are prone to great arrogance and hubris—possessing intellects to rival the greatest human sages from infancy, most find it inconceivable that they could be lacking in knowledge or judgment.

Tome dragons have disproportionably long tails ending in pointed fins that flick through the air as they corkscrew in flight. Their scales are silver and piscine, with an iridescent sheen like a rainbow salmon's. Their short limbs end in slender digits well suited to fine manipulation (even the largest of tome dragons can turn the pages of a small book without difficulty). Tome dragons have expressive faces wreathed in great manes of silky hair (an oddity among dragonkind), and frills of thin spines jut from their cheeks. Their eyes reflect the colors of the sky: pale blue at birth, turning to azure by early adulthood, then deep purple, and finally a dark midnight blue flecked with silver starlight. Their voices vary, but are always full of character: thick accents, raspy coughs, smoky whispers, and booming laughs are all common.

Tome dragons are more social than other dragon species, and many have been known to lair with others of their kind. These cabals almost invariably gather in enormous libraries they build on secluded mountainsides. Such libraries are frequently mistaken for monasteries because of their locations and the minimalist adornments tome dragons prefer.

Tome dragons need very little food to survive, and most eat as little as possible—food is just a distraction, in their eyes, from more worldly pursuits. What they do eat tends to be very plain. Tome dragons do, however, have a soft spot for fine teas, the more exotic the ingredients the better.

COMBAT

Tome dragons, naturally, rely on their spells. With spontaneous and free access to powerful metamagic, tome dragons usually take feats such as Silent Spell, Empower Spell, and Quicken

TOME DRAGONS BY AGE

Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha	Grapple	Base Attack/ Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Frightful Presence DC
Wyrmling	T	3d12–3 (16)	7	10	9	16	14	13	+3/–7	+3	+2	+3	+5	1d8 (10)	—
Very young	S	6d12 (39)	9	10	11	18	16	15	+6/+1	+6	+5	+5	+8	2d8 (13)	—
Young	M	9d12+9 (67)	9	10	13	18	16	15	+9/+8	+8	+7	+6	+9	3d8 (15)	—
Juvenile	M	12d12+12 (90)	11	10	13	20	18	17	+12/+12	+12	+9	+8	+12	4d8 (17)	—
Young adult	L	15d12+30 (127)	13	10	15	20	18	17	+15/+20	+15	+11	+9	+13	5d8 (19)	20
Adult	L	18d12+54 (171)	15	10	17	22	20	19	+18/+24	+19	+14	+11	+16	6d8 (22)	23
Mature adult	H	21d12+84 (220)	17	10	19	24	22	21	+21/+32	+22	+16	+12	+18	7d8 (24)	25
Old	H	24d12+96 (252)	19	10	19	26	24	23	+24/+36	+26	+18	+14	+21	8d8(26)	28
Very old	H	27d12+135 (310)	21	10	21	28	26	25	+27/+40	+30	+20	+15	+23	9d8 (28)	30
Ancient	H	30d12+150 (345)	23	10	21	30	28	27	+30/+44	+34	+22	+17	+26	10d8 (30)	33
Wyrm	G	33d12+231 (412)	25	10	23	32	30	29	+33/+52	+36	+24	+18	+28	11d8 (32)	35
Great wyrm	G	36d12+252 (486)	25	10	25	34	32	31	+36/+55	+39	+27	+20	+31	12d8 (35)	38

TOME DRAGON ABILITIES BY AGE

Age	Speed	Initiative	AC	Special Abilities	Caster Level*	SR
Wyrmling	20 ft., fly 90 ft. (good)	0	14 (+2 size, +1 natural, +1 insight), touch 13, flat-footed 14	Arcane sight, precognition, telepathy 100 ft.	3rd	11
Very young	20 ft., fly 90 ft. (good)	0	16 (+1 size, +4 natural, +1 insight), touch 12, flat-footed 16	Free metamagic: +1 level	5th	13
Young	30 ft., fly 120 ft. (good)	0	18 (+7 natural, +1 insight), touch 11, flat-footed 18	DR 5/magic	7th	15
Juvenile	30 ft., fly 120 ft. (good)	0	22 (+10 natural, +2 insight), touch 12, flat-footed 22	*Clairaudience/ clairvoyance*	9th	17
Young adult	40 ft., fly 120 ft. (good)	0	24 (–1 size, +13 natural, +2 insight), touch 11, flat-footed 24	Free metamagic: +2 levels	11th	19
Adult	40 ft., fly 120 ft. (good)	0	27 (–1 size, +16 natural, +2 insight), touch 11, flat-footed 27	DR 10/magic	13th	21
Mature adult	50 ft., fly 150 ft. (good)	0	30 (–2 size, +19 natural, +3 insight), touch 11, flat-footed 30	*Plane shift*	15th	23
Old	50 ft., fly 150 ft. (good)	0	33 (–2 size, +22 natural, +3 insight), touch 11, flat-footed 33	Free metamagic: +3 levels	17th	25
Very old	50 ft., fly 150 ft. (good)	0	36 (–2 size, +25 natural, +3 insight), touch 11, flat-footed 36	DR 15/magic	19th	27
Ancient	50 ft., fly 150 ft. (good)	0	40 (–2 size, +28 natural, +4 insight), touch 12, flat-footed 40	*True seeing*	21st **	29
Wyrm	60 ft., fly 180 ft. (good)	0	41 (–4 size, +31 natural, +4 insight), touch 10, flat-footed 41	Free metamagic: +4 levels	23rd **	31
Great wyrm	60 ft., fly 180 ft. (good)	0	44 (–4 size, +34 natural, +4 insight), touch 10, flat-footed 44	*Astral projection*	25th **	33

** Tome dragons automatically know all divination and conjuration spells on the sorcerer spell list. They can also cast spells from the Knowledge cleric domain as sorcerer spells.*

*** Grants no more spells known or spells per day than a level 20 sorcerer, but improves spells with effects depending on caster level.*

Spell as soon as possible, combining them to create magic of astounding potency. They prefer to fight while airborne, taking advantage of their natural grace and maneuverability, assisted by summoned monsters to distract ranged attackers below. Tome dragon battle tactics are, of course, genius. With such cunning minds and potent divinations, many tome dragons are able to come to a fight knowing more about the enemy's plans than the warriors who must carry them out.

Breath Weapon (Su): A tome dragon's breath weapon is weak (compared to other dragons), but very adaptable. Tome dragons can accurately spit a small bead of raw elemental material great distances (as far as a dragon's line breath weapon can extend), which then explodes in a manner similar to a *fireball* (blast radius equals 5 feet per age category). While the amount of damage remains the same no matter which element is used, the type of damage varies: a blast of air deals sonic damage, earth deals piercing damage, water deals nonlethal bludgeoning damage, and fire deals fire damage.

Free Metamagic (Su): Metamagic comes naturally to tome dragons. Applying a metamagic feat to a spell takes no extra time for a tome dragon (rather than increasing casting time to a full-round action or adding another full-round action, as normal for sorcerers). In addition, tome dragons can subtract an amount based on their age category from the increase in spell level caused by using metamagic feats. The number listed is the total reduction in extra spell levels, not the reduction for each feat applied (so a tome dragon with two levels of free metamagic would still add three levels to the cost of an empowered, maximized spell). This bonus can be applied to only one spell per round (additional spells cast in a single round are unaffected).

Other Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*arcane sight* (wyrmling or older), 3/day—*clairaudience/clairvoyance* (juvenile or older); 1/day—*plane shift* (mature adult or older), *true seeing* (ancient or older), *astral projection* (great wyrm).

JUVENILE TOME DRAGON CR 10

LN Medium dragon (air)

Init +4; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvison 120 ft., keen senses; Listen +19, Spot +19,

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Halfling

AC 24, touch 14, flat-footed 24

hp 90 (12 HD); **DR** 5/magic

Immune paralysis, sleep

SR 17

Fort +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +12

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 120 ft. (good)

Melee bite +12 (1d6) and 2 claws +7 (1d4)

Base Atk +12; **Grp** +12

Special Atk breath weapon

Combat Gear *lesser metamagic rod (quicken), wand of Melf's acid arrow* (3rd, 50 charges)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 9th, +12 ranged touch, the following plus all conjuration, divination, and spells from the Knowledge domain)

4th (4/day)—*charm monster* (DC 17), *wall of ice*

3rd (7/day)—*dispel magic, displacement, fireball* (DC 16)

2nd (7/day)—*cat's grace, invisibility, minor image, resist energy*

1st (7/day)—*alarm, hypnotism, magic missile, protection from chaos, shield*

0 (6/day)—*arcane mark, dancing lights, ghost sound, light, mage hand, mending, message, prestidigitation*

Spell-like Abilities (CL 12th)

at will—*arcane sight*

3/day—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*

Abilities Str 11, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 20, Wis 18, Cha 17

SQ alternate form, free metamagic +1, graceful flight, physical frailty, precognition

Feats Empower Spell, Extend Spell, Improved Initiative, Silent Spell, Still Spell.

Skills Concentration +16, Diplomacy +20, Knowledge (arcane) +20, Knowledge (religion) +20, Knowledge (the planes) +20, Listen +19, Search +20, Spellcraft +22 (+24 to decipher spells on scrolls), Sense Motive +18, Spot +19, Use Magic Device +18 (+20 involving scrolls)

Possessions *ring of protection +2*

Breath Weapon (Su): 60 ft. range, 20 ft. radius, 4d8 damage (may be fire, nonlethal bludgeoning, piercing, or sonic), Reflex DC 17 half.

GOLEM, RUNE

Large Construct

Hit Dice: 12d10+30 (96 hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), climb 30 ft.

Armor Class: 20 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +9 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 18

Base Attack/Grapple: +9/+19

Attack: Spear +14 melee (1d8+9)

Full Attack: Spear +14/+9 melee (1d8+9)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Runecast, splinter death, woodrune

Special Qualities: Construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., meld into wood, scent, SR 20, tree stride

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +4

Abilities: Str 23, Dex 14, Con —, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 16

Skills: Climb +16, Listen +10, Spot +10, Survival +8

Feats: Dodge, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack[B], Track

Environment: Cold and temperate forests

Organization: Solitary or gang (2–4)

Challenge Rating: 8

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: 13–18 HD; 19–36 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: —

Tall and spindly, this creature and the large spear it carries are made entirely from carefully engraved pieces of wood, bone, and horn. Its head bears a crown of antlers and tusks.

Covered entirely in intricate runes and sigils, a rune golem is usually made of hardwood and bone: oak, rowan, walnut, narwhale horns, and whale bones. Their heads are commonly adorned with the antlers of reindeer or caribou, or even with mammoth tusks or dire tiger teeth. Rune golems are a relatively primitive golem type but make up for their weak construction with speed and powerful magical abilities.

Rune golems often hang their victims after death for crows to feed on. Bodies in gibbets or hanging from nooses are a sure sign that a sacred grove is guarded by a rune golem. Some rune golems also remove a victim's lungs by cutting through the back and pulling out the organs to make a "blood eagle" as a sacrifice to the forest and thunder deities.

Rune golems do not speak but understand Common, Druidic, and Sylvan.

COMBAT

Rune golems are often grove guardians for Norse or druidic shrines. They invariably are kept in the branches of sacred trees or on the roof of a shrine when not in use, leaping into combat against their makers' enemies.

Runecast (Su): A rune golem can hurl a charged rune of invoked energies at its enemies. This acts a 60-foot ranged touch attack; any creature struck by the ray is marked by runes from head to toe and loses both sight and hearing for 1d4 rounds. The runes themselves are permanent and mark the victim as an oathbreaker, corruptor of sanctuaries, defiler of the sacred groves, and outcast. These runes impose a –6 penalty on Charisma-based skills and can only be removed by *remove curse*.

Splinter Death (Su): When a rune golem is destroyed, all its magical energies are used to power a tremendous explosion of wooden spikes. All creatures within 30 feet of the golem take 6d6 points of piercing damage. A DC 19 Reflex save results in half damage. This save DC is Charisma-based.

Woodrune (Ex): A rune golem can cast one of its runes to create a web of eldritch power. This attack functions just like the *web* spell, except that the duration is 12 minutes and the webs are made of energy and cannot be burned away. A DC 19 Reflex save avoids complete entanglement. This save DC is Charisma-based.

Meld Into Wood (Su): As a swift action, a rune golem can meld into any large wooden object, from temple pillars to live trees to the keel of a ship, three times per day for up to 2 hours. The wood need not be large enough to accommodate the golem's body in all three dimensions, but the total volume must be larger than the golem.

The golem and up to 100 pounds of nonliving gear can merge with the wood. While in the wood, the golem remains in tenuous contact with the face of the wood through which it melded. It remains aware of the passage of time and can cast spells on itself while hiding in the wood. Nothing that goes on outside the wood can be seen, but the golem hears what happens around it. Minor physical damage to the wood does

not harm the golem, but any attack that deals more than 10 points of damage to the wood expels the golem and deals 5d6 points of damage to it. The wood's complete destruction, such as through *disintigration*, expels the golem (as noted above) and slays it instantly unless it makes a DC 18 Fortitude save.

Any time before 2 hours pass, the golem can step out of the wood through the surface that it entered. If the 2 hours pass or the effect is dispelled before it voluntarily exits, the golem is expelled and the effect ends.

Tree Stride (Su): A rune golem may *tree stride* as a 12th-level caster once per day.

CONSTRUCTION

The largest pieces of a rune golem must come from normal wood that has been struck by lightning but has not rotted or splintered significantly. Assembly requires a minimum of five tree trunks or large branches—one for each limb and one large one for the torso (including head). This wood is then carved and inlaid with runes made from horn, tusk, and bone. Their heads are often carved to be especially fearsome, and their eyes set with agates, mother of pearl, or amber. The materials alone cost 6,000 gp for this golem, much from the cost of workmanship, semi-precious gems, and hardwoods. Once constructed, special varnish, sealants, and preservatives worth 500 gp are also required to keep the golem from rotting.

Note that creating a rune golem requires casting typically druidic spells. Costs for other casters are likely higher. Assembling the body requires a DC 13 Craft (woodworking) check or a DC 17 Heal check.

CL 9th; Craft Construct, *bull's strength, entangle, meld into wood, tree stride, warp wood*, caster must be at least 9th level; Price 35,000 gp; Cost 17,500 gp and 1,750 XP.

GRAY SHIVER

Diminutive Magical Beast
Hit Dice: 9d10 (49 hp)
Initiative: +6
Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), climb 20 ft.
Armor Class: 24 (+6 Dex, +4 size, +4 natural), touch 20, flat-footed 18
Base Attack/Grapple: +9/–8
Attack: Bite +8 melee (1d2–5 plus poison)
Full Attack: Bite +8 melee (1d2–5 plus poison)
Space/Reach: 1 ft./0 ft.
Special Attacks: Bone hermitage, minion web, poison, spells
Special Qualities: Damage reduction 10/magic and bludgeoning, dark healing, megalomania, spell resistance 20
Saves: Fort +11, Ref +17, Will +9
Abilities: Str 1, Dex 22, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 21
Skills: Hide +16, Knowledge (arcane) +13, Move Silently +16, Spellcraft +13
Feats: Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Maximize Spell
Environment: Any
Organization: Plot (1 plus 3d18 dominated minions: commoners, warriors, and experts)
Challenge Rating: 9
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always evil (any)
Advancement: By character class

Wearing an old yellowed skull like a shell, a hairy spider, with cruel malice dancing across its many eyes, skitters and clicks forward.

When a lich is destroyed many adventurers are careless enough to leave its bones intact. In such cases, the skull might survive and with it a seed of the evil power that once animated it. Occasionally, a spider makes its home in that skull, and over time it becomes something more than it once was. Flush with the slivers of dark might that once plotted and schemed, the spider is bombarded with the last thoughts of the lich, thoughts of domination. These dreams lead them to develop cults and cabals of ensnared victims and weekly "sacraments" to guarantee the gray shiver's hold. Gray shivers tend to inherit more of the bombast than the skill of the lich, so they think of themselves as evil geniuses when, in reality, they are only malicious vermin.

Gray shivers speak Common and Draconic, although some have been known to speak the languages of their host skull.

COMBAT

Gray shivers avoid physically attacking well-armed enemies. It is far better to have its minions deceive and capture opponents and then poison them when they are bound and gagged. Every gray shiver places its skull in an out-of-the-way place and often where there are plenty of other bones, such as in a reliquary or an ossuary. Although it does not need to wear its skull at all times, it often does so for extra protection. In the event opponents track down its lair, the gray shiver hides among the skulls, blasting the party with spells and summoning surviving minions to its aid. If the gray shiver encounters anyone who destroyed the original lich, it recognizes them and seeks their doom.

Bone Hermitage (Ex): While hiding inside its skull, a gray shiver cannot be detected by any spells of the divination school and has partial cover. While still, its racial bonus on Hide checks increases to +30. The protection against divinations only applies when the gray shiver is in the original lich's skull that created it, but the other bonuses apply to any skull hideaway. A gray shiver can move its full speed while inside a skull.

Minion Web (Su): Gray shivers can mentally communicate with dominated minions, and can receive full sensory information from them.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 19, initial and secondary damage are special: victims who fail either savings throws are dominated by the gray shiver, per the spell *dominate monster*. Those who fail the initial save are dominated for 1 minute, while those who fail the second are dominated for 1 week. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Skull Dependency (Ex): Should the lich's skull ever be destroyed, the gray shiver reverts to an ordinary spider in 1 hour. The skull has hardness 10 and 20 hit points. While the Gray shiver is inside, the skull is treated as a piece of equipment that can be sundered but cannot be disarmed.

Spells: Gray shivers cast spells as 9th-level sorcerers (regardless of the class of the lich whose skull it resides in).

Typical Sorcerer Spells Known: (6/6/6/6/4, base save DC 15 + spell level): 0—*arcane mark, detect magic, ghost sound, mage hand, message, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic;* 1st—*magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, sleep, true strike, ventriloquism;* 2nd—*eagle's splendor, ghoul touch, scorching ray, touch of idiocy;* 3rd—*fireball, major image, summon monster III;* 4th—*greater invisibility, polymorph.*

Dark Healing (Ex): Gray shivers are healed by any effect that normally heals undead, such as *inflict* spells or negative energy. They do not receive a save against such effects. Gray shivers are also healed by positive energy. Gray shivers detect as undead to any divinations but are not otherwise treated as undead; thus, they cannot be turned.

Megalomania (Ex): The lich's hubris and lust for power cannot be denied: gray shivers add their Charisma bonus on all saving throws.

Skills: Gray shivers have a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks.

HELLCHAIN WEAVER

Gargantuan Outsider (Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful)
Hit Dice: 14d8+112 (175 hp)
Initiative: +4
Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), climb 50 ft.
Armor Class: 26 (+4 Dex, –4 size, +16 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 26
Base Attack/Grapple: +14/+35
Attack: Chain +19 melee (2d6+9, 17–20)
Full Attack: 4 chains +19 melee (2d6+9, 17–20)
Space/Reach: 20 ft./20 ft.
Special Attacks: Grinder, improved grab, pounce, rasping metal
Special Qualities: Damage reduction 10/silver or good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, iron web, regeneration 5, spell resistance 24, tremorsense 60 ft.
Saves: Fort +17, Ref +13, Will +12
Abilities: Str 28, Dex 18, Con 27, Int 6, Wis 16, Cha 15
Skills: Climb +20, Hide +13, Jump +30, Listen +20, Move Silently +21, Search +15, Spot +28, Survival +20
Feats: Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (chain), Power Attack
Environment: Nine Hells of Baator
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 13
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always lawful evil
Advancement: 14–28 HD (Gargantuan); 29–42 HD (Colossal)

The shriek of metal on metal howls out as an eight-legged mass of chains drops from the ceiling. Made entirely of cruel hooks, barbed chains, and jagged iron, its metal screams as it moves. The chains turn and twist on each other as knives and barbs dance.

Those who fear chains fear kytons, but kytons fear something else. Hushed whispers in Baator speak of places unsafe even for fiends and of rusting webs in the depths of Jangling Hiter. Hellchain weavers are the cause of many of these rumors, and they more than live up to their reputation. Sinister and sadistic, hellchain weavers prefer to chase their prey for hours or days to heighten the thrill of the hunt, sometimes competing with each other to see which weaver can carve the most gruesome wounds. Hellchain weavers speak Infernal.

COMBAT

Stealthy hunters, hellchain weavers often dash into the midst of a party, using their pounce and improved grab abilities to seize an opponent before climbing away. The grinder ability makes short work of a grappled opponent, and the hellchain weaver then stalks the party again to repeat the bloody cycle. These spidery horros rarely stick around for a fair fight, instead picking off victims one by one, both as a safety precaution and as psychological torture for the survivors.

Grinder (Ex): If a hellchain weaver successfully grapples with an opponent and drags the opponent into its square, the spinning razors and wires flay the hapless victim, automatically dealing 1d6+9 points of slashing damage per round the grapple is maintained.

While an opponent is caught in the grinder, the hellchain weaver can forgo additional attacks on the captured opponent with its chains, using them to attack others. A hellchain weaver can grapple up to 2 Medium, 8 Small, 32 Tiny, or 128 Diminutive or smaller opponents in this way. When a hellchain weaver has its maximum number of opponents trapped, it can no longer grapple others without releasing a captured opponent.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a hellchain weaver must hit with its chain attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action. If it wins the ensuing grapple check, it establishes a hold and may use its grinder ability.

Pounce (Ex): If a hellchain weaver charges, it can make a full attack in the same round.

Rasping Metal (Su): At will as a free action, a hellchain weaver can cause its whirling blades to scratch against each other, producing an unholy din. The hideous racket seems to whisper words of despair and agony. All within 30 feet who can hear the rasping metal must make a DC 19 Fortitude save or be deafened for 1d4 hours; grappled foes automatically fail their saves. This save DC is Charisma-based.

This noise makes all Listen checks within 100 feet (except those trying to hear the hellchain weaver) suffer a –10 circumstance penalty. Hellchain weavers are immune to this effect but still take the Listen penalty.

Iron Webs (Ex): Hellchain weavers can spin webs made entirely from chains, forming bridges, walls, or ladders, creating five 10 foot by 10 foot sections of chain each round. These chains can be used to bind helpless opponents. Those bound in this chains can escape with a DC 25 Escape Artist check, although each attempt deals 2d6 points of damage.. Scaling these chains requires a successful DC 20 Climb check. Failing this check by 5 or more deals 2d6 points of damage from the razor sharp barbs.

Regeneration: Hellchain weavers take normal damage from silvered weapons, good-aligned weapons, and spells or effects with the chaotic descriptor.

A hellchain weaver that loses a piece of its body regrows it in 2d6×10 minutes. Holding the severed member against the stump enables it to reattach instantly.

Skills: Hellchain weavers have a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks, a +8 racial bonus on Climb and Spot checks, and a +10 racial bonus on Jump checks. A hellchain weaver can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

LIVING WALL

A living wall is a horrifying undead amalgam of several creatures fused into a wall-like form, desperately wishing for an opportunity to destroy its creator (and thus end its own existence). The wall appears like a normal stone or brick wall, but this is an illusion that hides its true form—a mass of fused flesh, including faces, hands, broken bones, feet, arms, and legs jutting from the surface, all of it mottled gray and sinewy as if starving. Any creature within 15 feet of a wall hears its plaintive cries for help.

Made up of numerous creatures, all with this template, a living wall is a feared thing because it absorbs its opponents

and the bodies of those it slays into itself. Each creature within a wall can use all of the abilities it possessed in life, whether weapon, feat, or spell, although its lack of mobility limits their use in some cases (it could not use Spring Attack, for example). It never fights against itself and allows its component creatures to function independently as necessary. When an opponent presents itself, however, all of the component creatures work together to destroy the creature and add it to the ever-growing wall.

A living wall grows with each creature it absorbs but cannot extend beyond the dimensions of the space it inhabits. For example, a stone wall built perpendicular to a natural cave wall might run 50 feet, and a small living wall may comprise 20 feet of its length; if the living wall absorbs enough creatures it could eventually cover that entire 50-foot length but could not extend further into the natural stone wall of the cave (any further creatures absorbed after this limit is reached are merely held within the wall, used to replace sections that are destroyed).

A living wall only absorbs creatures, weapons, and magic items, leaving nonmagical gear behind at the base of the wall. These leavings often attract other creatures, resulting in more victims. A living wall is a creature and is not subject to spells such as *passwall*.

Some living walls are deliberate creations by evil and cruel necromancers using rare spells, but some (particularly in RAVENLOFT) arise spontaneously when a person is entombed alive within a wall. This only happens when the terrified victim curses his slayer, his screams rising loud enough to be heard beyond the walls of his prison. When the victim dies, the curse soils his life energy, which becomes trapped in the wall. Eventually, madness overtakes the spirit and turns it chaotic evil, at which point all dead creatures within 300 feet of the wall rise, shamble to the wall, and join it, fusing together into a thing that seems like stone made from fused and transformed flesh. Any creature killed within 300 feet of the wall thereafter eventually rises to join it.

If a living wall manages to destroy its creator, or the creator dies within 300 feet of the wall, the creator's corpse is assimilated into the wall, all other absorbed bodies are ejected (and released into the peace of death), and the wall reverts to a normal structure with its creator entombed within it.

SAMPLE LIVING WALL

This stone wall appears normal, but moans of pain, horror, and sorrow emanate from it. Although the wall is still, there is a sense of chaotic motion within it.

The following sample living wall is made up of four creatures with the living wall template: two 4th-level human warriors, a manticore, and a 7th-level elf sorcerer. Encountered as a group, these living wall creatures are an EL 10 encounter.

COMBAT

A living wall retaliates against attacks directed against it or desperately grabs creatures that come within 5 feet in a plea for help. Unfortunately, the wall cannot help but try to absorb creatures it grabs, so even this desperate act is a dangerous attack.

LIVING WALL, 4TH-LEVEL HUMAN WARRIOR **CR 4**
CE Medium Undead
Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +8, Spot +8
Languages Common

AC 21, touch 10, flat-footed 21
hp 26 (4 HD); **DR** 5/—
Fort +4, **Ref** +1, **Will** +2

Spd 0 ft.
Melee +1 *longsword* +11 (1d8+7/19–20) or slam +9 (1d6+5)
Ranged heavy crossbow +4 (1d10/19–20)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +13
Atk Options Cleave, improved grab, Power Attack
Special Atk absorb

Abilities Str 21, Dex —, Con —, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 14
SQ amalgam, hidden, immovable, many arms, sickening wounds (DC 14), undead traits
Feats Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword)
Skills Intimidate +9, Listen +8, Ride +2, Spot +8
Possessions +1 *breastplate*, +1 *longsword*, heavy crossbow with 40 bolts

LIVING WALL, MANTICORE **CR 6**
LE Medium Undead
Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +9, Spot +13
Languages Common

AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 26
hp 39 (6 HD); **DR** 5/—
Fort +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3

Spd 0 ft.
Melee 2 claws +13 (2d4+7) and bite +11 (1d8+3)
Ranged 6 spikes +7 (1d8+3)
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +17
Atk Options Improved grab
Special Atk absorb, spikes

Abilities Str 24, Dex —, Con —, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 13
SQ amalgam, hidden, immovable, many arms, scent, sickening wounds (DC 14), undead traits
Feats Flyby Attack, Multiattack, Track[B], Weapon Focus (spikes).
Skills Listen +9, Spot +13, Survival +1

LIVING WALL, 7TH-LEVEL ELF SORCERER **CR 8**
NE Medium Undead
Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Common, Elven

AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17
hp 45 (7 HD); **DR** 5/—
Fort +2, **Ref** +4, **Will** +7

Spd 0 ft.
Melee slam +4 (1d6+1)
Ranged light crossbow +3 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +8
Atk Options Improved grab
Special Atk absorb, spells
Combat Gear *wand of melf's acid arrow* (3rd, 50 charges)
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 7th, +4 ranged touch)
3rd (5/day): *hold person* (DC 19), *lightning bolt* (DC 19)
2nd (8/day): *bull's strength, false life, scorching ray*
1st (8/day): *burning hands* (DC 17), *charm person* (DC 17), *magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, shield*
0 (6/day): *detect magic, flare* (DC 16), *mage hand, ray of frost, read magic, resistance, touch of fatigue* (DC 16)

Abilities Str 13, Dex —, Con —, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 22
SQ amalgam, hidden, immovable, many arms, sickening wounds (DC 19), undead traits
Feats Empower Spell, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (ray)
Skills Intimidate +9, Listen +8, Ride +2, Spot +8
Possessions light crossbow with 40 bolts, *bracers of armor +2*

CREATING A LIVING WALL

"Living wall" is an acquired template that can be added to any Small, Medium, or Large corporeal aberration, animal, dragon, fey, giant, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, outsider, or vermin creature with at least 4 Hit Dice. A living wall has all the base creatures' statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: The creature's type changes to undead. Do not recalculate base attack bonus, saves, or skill points. The creature's size changes to Medium, and although it retains its reach it loses all other bonuses derived from size.

Speed: As an immobile creature, a living wall's speed is reduced to 0 feet and it loses all additional movement speeds (such as climb or fly).

Hit Dice: Increase all current and future Hit Dice to d12s.

Armor Class: A living wall loses any modifiers to AC derived from Dexterity. A living wall has a +5 natural armor bonus or the base creature's natural armor bonus, whichever is greater.

Attack: A living wall retains all of the attacks of the base creature and gains a slam attack if it didn't already have one. If the base creature can use weapons, the living wall retains this ability. A living wall without weapons uses either its slam attack or its primary natural weapon (if it has any). A living wall armed with a weapon uses its slam or a weapon, as it desires.

Full Attack: A living wall fighting without weapons uses either its slam attack (see above) or its natural weapons (if it has any). If armed with a weapon, it usually uses the weapon as its primary attack along with a slam or other natural weapon as a natural secondary attack.

Damage: Living walls have slam attacks. If the base creature does not have this attack form, this slam attack deals 1d6 points of damage. Creatures that have other kinds of natural weapons retain their old damage values or use 1d6, whichever is better.

Special Attacks: A living wall retains all the base creature's special attacks and gains those described below. Save DCs are equal to 10 + 1/2 the living wall's HD + the living wall's Charisma modifier unless otherwise noted.

Absorb (Su): On its turn, a living wall can make an opposed grapple check to absorb a helpless or pinned opponent of size Large or smaller. An absorbed creature is helpless and cannot breathe. Once it suffocates, the creature, if it meets the right criteria, is made into a living wall creature. Creatures that do not need to breathe or eat remain within the living wall until the wall is destroyed. Half of any damage dealt to a living wall creature is also dealt to any creatures absorbed within. Creatures trapped in this way are freed upon the destruction of the living wall creature that absorbed them.

Creatures of a size smaller than Small and creatures with fewer than 4 Hit Dice are merely absorbed into the wall, which heals the wall a number of hit points equal to 1/2 the absorbed creature's normal hit point total (applied to the most

injured sections of the wall first). This ability does not work on creatures of Huge size or larger, or creatures of the construct, elemental, ooze, plant, or undead types. All other creatures are absorbed into the wall, creating a new 5-foot-long section of wall with the living wall template. This new living wall creature is created adjacent to the creature that absorbed it, pushing other creatures away to make space. Creating a new creature in this way does not heal any other creatures in the wall.

Improved Grab (Ex): A living wall that hits with a natural attack (such as a claw, bite, or unarmed strike) deals normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. Although they are treated as a larger creature in many respects, each creature in a living wall may grapple individually and does not impose a penalty on other creatures in a living wall when part of a grapple. Creatures grappled by a living wall creature are pulled into its square (the living wall creature does not move).

Many Arms (Ex): A living wall creature possesses numerous arms. While they cannot wield additional weapons, armor, or cast spells, they assist in all grapple checks, granting a +4 circumstance bonus on such checks.

Sickening Wounds (Ex): The wounds of a living wall emit a sickening stench. Anyone adjacent to a living wall creature when it takes damage is nauseated for 1d4 rounds. A Fortitude save avoids this condition.

Special Qualities: A living wall retains all the base creature's special qualities and gains those described below.

Amalgam (Ex): Each living wall creature is part of a larger wall, forming a continuous barrier with each creature taking up a 5-foot-square section of the wall. While effects that target only a single creature affect only one living wall creature (not the entire group forming a wall), the entire group is treated as a single creature for the purposes of the turn undead ability (adding all of their Hit Dice together). Each creature makes saving throws separately versus effects that target multiple creatures.

Living wall creatures share the same goals and intentions, but may take different actions each round from one another. Each is treated as a separate creature for the purposes of feats (such as Spring Attack), skills, and attacks of opportunity. While living wall creatures all think independently, they can communicate with each other instantaneously, meaning that if one creature is aware of an opponent, all sections are aware.

Damage Reduction (Su): A living wall creature is extraordinarily resistant and gains damage reduction 5/—.

Hidden (Su): A living wall creature is disguised by an illusion similar to *disguise self* making it appear like an ordinary wall. Those adjacent to the wall see through this illusion.

Immovable (Ex): A living wall creature cannot be moved in any way unless all of the other living wall creatures are moved, making it immune to bull rush and trip attempts. As with a normal wall, Tumble cannot be used to move through a square containing a living wall creature, although the creature can be scaled (Climb DC 20).

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +4, Cha +4. Being an immovable undead creature, a living wall has no Dexterity or Constitution score.

Skills: Living walls have a +4 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks. Otherwise same as the base creature.

Organization: Wall (4–8 living wall creatures forming a single solid wall).

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +1.

Treasure: Same as the base creature.

Alignment: Any evil.

Advancement: By character class.

Level Adjustment: —

MALFERA

Large Outsider (Chaotic, Evil, Extraplanar)
Hit Dice: 9d8+54 (94 hp)
Initiative: +5
Speed: 50 ft. (10 squares), swim 20 ft.
Armor Class: 18 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +8 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 17
Base Attack/Grapple: +9/+23
Attack: Claw +14 melee (1d10+6)
Full Attack: 2 claws +14 melee (1d10+6) and bite +9 melee (1d8+3 plus poison)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks: Acid tentacles, improved grab (claw), nightmare, poison
Special Qualities: Acid immunity, cold resistance 10, damage reduction 10/magic, darkvision 60 ft., electricity resistance 10, knock, outsider traits, see invisibility
Saves: Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +10
Abilities: Str 22, Dex 12, Con 22, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 16
Skills: Climb +12, Diplomacy +11, Intimidate +15, Jump +18, Knowledge (the planes) +8, Listen +14, Move Silently +13, Search +12, Sense Motive +14, Spot +14, Swim +14
Feats: Ability Focus (nightmare), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack
Environment: Any chaotic-aligned plane or dream plane
Organization: Solitary or pair
Challenge Rating: 6
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Usually chaotic evil
Advancement: 10–18 HD (Large); 19–27 HD (Huge)
Level Adjustment: —

The head of this nightmarish lumbering humanoid resembles that of a demonic elephant. Horns sprout from the top of its head, its chest is covered in slimy tentacles, its feet are webbed and clawed, and its massive arms end in large jagged pincers. It is black as night, with red eyes, bulging veins, and bloody highlights on its flesh and fur.

Malferas are predatory creatures from the Demiplane of Nightmares, a plane where evil dreams are grown and planted within mortal minds. Malferas aren't intelligent enough to craft complex nightmares (that is left to more powerful and mysterious beings that rule the demiplane) but are happy to take the role of various intimidating monsters or lurking horrors, even if only part of them appears—a claw reaching out from under a bed, a horned silhouette in a doorway, or a mass of writhing worms for a blindly-groping hand to find. They also use their magical abilities to project these nightmares into mortals, either at the direction of their masters or out of sheer independent malice.

Malferas lack the power to leave the Demiplane of Nightmares unassisted. Any time one is found on the Material Plane it is due to the efforts of an evil wizard or cleric. They have been known to ally with fiends, slaadi, or other evil creatures bent on chaos, fear, and destruction.

As they are outsiders native to a strange magical realm, malferas do not require physical nourishment, although they can eat and drink (often demonstrating this to horrifying effect as part of a nightmare). Some sages believe they are sustained on the collective fears of mortals.

Malferas speak Abyssal and fragments of several mortal languages—usually threats and taunts learned from elder malferas and planar travelers.

COMBAT

Malferas are accustomed to overwhelming their "puny" mortal opponents in reality or in dream and rarely bother with organized tactics unless facing an opponent with unusual abilities. They are slightly wary of spellcasters, as they know they are vulnerable to binding spells and do not welcome forced servitude.

Acid Tentacles (Ex): When a malfera participates in a grapple, the tentacles on its chest aid in the grapple, giving it a +4 bonus on grapple checks. Each round the malfera maintains the grapple, its tentacles secrete an acidic slime that deals 2d6 points of acid damage to its grappled opponent.

Improved Grab (Ex): If the malfera hits with a claw attack, it deals normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. Improved grab works against targets up to one size larger than the malfera. Each successful grapple check it makes during successive rounds automatically deals claw damage.

Nightmare (Su): Once per day, a malfera can enter the dreams of a sleeping creature on its current plane, the Material Plane, the Astral Plane, or the Ethereal Plane, haunting it as if using a *nightmare* spell (DC 16). Unlike the spell, the malfera immediately breaks the connection if its mind or body is attacked, and it does not require any knowledge of or connection to its target to use this ability (it can cast its mind out across the planes to attack a random intelligent sleeping creature). A DC 19 Will save negates this effect. The DC is Charisma-based.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 20, initial damage and secondary damage 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Knock (Su): A malfera's touch opens doors automatically as if using a *knock* spell (caster level 9th).

See Invisibility (Su): A malfera automatically detects invisible and ethereal creatures as if using the *see invisibility* spell. If dispelled, it can resume this ability as a free action.

Skills: A malfera has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it moves in a straight line.

NORKER

Norker, 1st-level Warrior
Small Humanoid (Goblinoid)
Hit Dice: 1d8+2 (6 hp)
Initiative: +1
Speed: 30 ft.
Armor Class: 17 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +5 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 16
Base Attack/Grapple: +1/–2
Attack: Club +3 melee (1d4+1) or javelin +3 ranged (1d4+1)
Full Attack: Club +3 melee (1d4+1) and bite –2 melee (1d4) or javelin +3 ranged (1d4+1)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft.
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +1, Will –2
Abilities: Str 13, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 7, Cha 6
Skills: Hide +5, Listen +1, Move Silently +5, Spot +1,
Feats: Alertness
Environment: Temperate and warm land and underground
Organization: Gang (4–9), or band (10–40 plus 50% non-combatants plus 1 3rd-level boss per 20 adults and one leader of 4th–6th level)
Challenge Rating: 1/2
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Usually chaotic evil
Advancement: By character class
Level Adjustment: +1

An unarmored hairless goblin with stony skin and long fangs, charges forth with a snarl.

Relatives of goblins and hobgoblins, norkers are goblinoids that forsake armor in favor of their incredibly tough hides. They are unreliable troops and tend to quarrel with each other, which keeps their numbers low compared to goblins.

Norkers resemble goblins, except they have 3-inch-long canine teeth and no hair. Their skin ranges from reddish brown to dark gray. A norker usually wears a loincloth and a belt that it ties its favorite possessions and trophies to.

Norkers speak a dialect of Goblin. Those with Intelligence scores of 12 or higher also speak Orc.

Most norkers encountered outside their homes are warriors; the information in the statistics block is for one of 1st level.

COMBAT

Norkers enjoy swarming tactics. Their weapons are simple and crudely made, but they are not averse to taking better weapons from their fallen foes. When bullied into submission by hobgoblins they can use basic military tactics, but they lapse into their old ways when not supervised.

Skills: Norkers have a +4 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

Challenge Rating: Norkers with levels in NPC classes have a CR equal to their character level –1.

NORKER SOCIETY

Norkers are tribal, although the leader's influence only extends about as far as his reach. This means their tribes are much smaller than a typical goblin tribe. They raid and steal from other humanoids, as they are too lazy to do their own hunting.

Their lairs are usually caves, old ruins, or villages taken by conquest. They can't cooperate well enough to build anything more than a fence or short rock wall around their lair, perhaps with a gate and a narrow walkway. A lair has 150% as many adult females and 200% as many young as adult males.

Different tribes of norkers rarely meet, but when they do the conflict often becomes bloody, with the victors taking the fangs of the losers as trophies. These conflicts rarely result in wholesale slaughter, as the leaders' battles establish who is dominant.

When powerful groups of hobgoblins command norkers, they often equip their lesser cousins with scale mail and shields. In these situations, the norkers are used as shock troops, absorbing the brunt of enemy attacks while

the hobgoblins use their superior intelligence, tactics, and equipment to break up the enemy forces.

Norkers worship Maglubiyet, the god of goblins and hobgoblins.

NORKERS AS CHARACTERS

Norker leaders tend to be fighters or fighter/rogues. Their clerics worship Maglubiyet and can choose two of the following domains: Chaos, Evil, or Trickery. Most norker spellcasters are adepts who favor spells that increase the power of the leader or a champion

Norker characters possess the following racial traits.

- +2 Dexterity, +2 Constitution, –2 Intelligence, –2 Wisdom, –2 Charisma.
- Small size: +1 bonus to Armor Class, +1 bonus on attack rolls, +4 bonus on Hide checks, –4 penalty on grapple checks, lifting and carrying limits 3/4 those of Medium characters.
- A norker's base land speed is 30 feet.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- +4 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.
- +5 natural armor bonus.
- Natural Weapon: bite (1d4).
- Automatic Languages: Common, Goblin. Bonus Languages: Draconic, Giant, Gnoll, Orc.
- Favored Class: Rogue.

The norker warrior presented here had the following ability scores before racial adjustments: Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

NUCKALAVEE

Large Monstrous Humanoid (Aquatic)
Hit Dice: 11d8+33 (82 hp)
Initiative: +2
Speed: 40 ft., swim 40 ft.
Armor Class: 16 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +5 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 14
Base Attack/Grapple: +11/+19
Attack: Claw +15 melee (1d8+4)
Full Attack: 2 claws +15 melee (1d8+4)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Breath weapon (6d6 cold), death aura, fear aura
Special Qualities: Amphibious, fast healing 5, fire resistance 30, immune to poison, SR 10, undead sympathy, water limitation
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +7
Abilities: Str 18, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 15
Skills: Hide +5, Listen +6, Move Silently +4, Spot +7, Swim +12,
Feats: Alertness, Power Attack, Stealthy, Weapon Focus (claw)
Environment: Temperate and cold aquatic
Organization: Solitary or troupe (1 nuckalavee and 2–4 ghasts or 7–12 ghouls)
Challenge Rating: 6
Treasure: —
Alignment: Usually chaotic evil
Advancement: By character class
Level Adjustment: —

This ugly creature looks like a mutated aquatic centaur. It is quadrupedal and horselike, with transparent skin revealing its white ropey muscles, yellow and orange blood vessels, black blood, and pulsing organs. Its head is enlarged, with gills and shiny black eyes like a fish and a mouth full of sharp teeth. The thing stinks like a body left rotting in the water.

Nuckalavees are evil aquatic creatures that sometimes walk on land in search of things they can kill, for they hate all life. They use their death aura to eliminate minor creatures near them and hunt larger ones for sport and trophies. The only creatures nuckalavee tolerate are undead, which likewise respect and tolerate them for their common hatred of living things. Nuckalavee avoid their own kind, only meeting every few years to reproduce.

A nuckalavee's lair is a great underwater cage made out of the bones of creatures it has killed. They build these offshore in seas or saltwater lakes, and a typical creature's lair just breaks the surface of the water, attracting curious creatures it can kill out of spite. Nuckalavees are carnivorous but kill far more than they could ever eat.

A few sages believe nuckalavees are descended from evil centaurs who fled to the sea to escape their good brethren. True centaurs deny this relationship, insisting that these monsters are mockeries of their kind created by some mad creature or god (and most sages agree with this origin, although the being responsible for their birth is unknown).

Nuckalavees speak Common and their own guttural language which is derived from Giant.

COMBAT

Nuckalavees rely on their death and fear auras to deal with inconsequential threats, using their breath weapon to soften up more dangerous opponents before using their claws to deal the killing blow. Nuckalavee spellcasters prefer spells that augment their physical combat abilities.

Breath Weapon (Su): A nuckalavee's breath weapon is a 60-foot cone of freezing water that deals 6d6 points of cold damage (DC 18 Reflex half) and is useable every 1d4 rounds. The DC is Constitution based.

Death Aura (Su): A nuckalavee's death aura deals 1 point of damage per round to all animals and vermin of Tiny or smaller size within 120 feet. The nuckalavee cannot suppress this effect.

Fast Healing (Ex): The nuckalavee regains 5 hit points per round as long as it is alive. Fast healing does not restore hit points lost from starvation, thirst, or suffocation, and it does not allow a creature to regrow or reattach lost body parts.

Fear Aura (Su): A nuckalavee's fear aura affects all creatures within 60 feet as a *fear* spell (DC 17 Will negates). It cannot suppress this effect. Other nuckalavees are immune to this ability. The DC is Charisma-based.

Immunities (Ex): A nuckalavee is immune to poison.

Undead Sympathy (Ex): A nuckalavee's loathing of all life pervades every fiber of its being and its aura. Nonintelligent undead respond to a nuckalavee as if it were undead (not attacking unless commanded to do so). Intelligent undead tolerate nuckalavees and sometimes ally with them.

Water Limitation (Ex): Although aquatic creatures, nuckalavees are native to the sea and cannot willingly enter fresh water. They can be physically moved or magically compelled to enter such water but never do so under their own volition.

Skills: A nuckalavee has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it moves in a straight line.

WARTURTLE

Large Magical Beast (Aquatic)
Hit Dice: 6d10+18 (51 hp)
Initiative: –2
Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 60 ft.
Armor Class: 17 (–1 size, –2 Dex, +10 natural), touch 7, flat-footed 17
Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+15
Attack: Bite +10 melee (1d8+5)
Full Attack: Bite +10 melee (1d8+5) and 2 claws +5 melee (1d6+2)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks: Ravenous charge, spiked plates
Special Qualities: Amphibious, damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., riders
Saves: Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +3
Abilities: Str 20, Dex 7, Con 16, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 9
Skills: Listen +5, Spot +5, Swim +14
Feats: Endurance, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun
Environment: Warm aquatic
Organization: Solitary or war party (2–5 with riders)
Challenge Rating: 4
Treasure: —
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 7–12 HD (Large), 13–18 (Huge)
Level Adjustment: —

This large beast appears to be a large common turtle covered in a heavy layer of spiked bone ridges. It moves and acts with a degree of enraged velocity that denounces the contention that such marine animals are slow, cumbersome, and unthreatening beasts.

These turtles are usually encountered as passive and benign animals. Some of the more potent and savage undersea races, however, have been able to force these once-gentle creatures into an almost-palpable frenzy using such tricks as magical influence, selective breeding, and simple cruelty. Lizardfolk and sahuagin have been especially successful in incorporating such creatures into their armies.

Due to the razor-sharp ridges along its back, the warturtle is often outfitted with special saddle that protects its rider from harm. These riders take great care of their mount, decorating its spines and ridges with primative patterns and carvings. These not only add an intimidating look to the beast, but also denote its owner and accomplishments.

Ridden into battle by a single rider, the warturtle provides both an excellent mount and fearsome opponent. Using the turtles' resilience and swimming speed, parties of warturtles with mounted riders have been able to attack trade ships and shore-based settlements with terrifying and destructive efficiency.

A sahuagin may use its *speak to sharks* ability (listed on page 217 of the *Monster Manual*) to communicate with warturtles.

COMBAT

Often striking from the darkness of the deep sea, warturtles frequently open combat with a powerful charge attack that forces an opponent away from her comrades. Thereafter the warturtle and its rider (if any) attempt to kill or subdue the unfortunate solitary victim before turning around and re-engaging the remaining party members.

Ravenous Charge (Ex): As a part of a charge attack, the warturtle can attempt to power its way forward through enemy lines in a special rush attack. The warturtle moves forward up to 30 feet (60 feet if swimming) and applies the effects of Improved Bull Rush to whomever it comes into contact with first. If the bull rush is successful, the warturtle continues to move forward, pushing the target back 5 feet for every 5 points by which its check result was greater than the defender's. If both the warturtle and the defender are swimming, the warturtle can choose to move up to its full movement regardless of the result. If the warturtle moves through any squares occupied by other creatures (allies or opponents) after the initial bull rush, apply an overrun check. The charge ends if a defender manages to beat the warturtle in either a bull rush or overrun check, the warturtle's rider tells it to stop, it hits a creature of Gargantuan size or larger, it encounters an impassable object or area of terrain, or it moves its full distance. When in the water, any nonaquatic creature suffers a –2 penalty on its checks while the warturtle gains a +2 bonus, which stacks with all other specific bonuses that apply to both overrun and bull rush.

Spiked Plates (Ex): Anyone struck by a charging warturtle's melee attack, bull rush, or overrun attempt takes 1d6 points of damage from the numerous spikes and sharp ridges of the shell in addition to any damage caused by the attack. Anyone attempting to bull rush, overrun, or grapple a warturtle takes 2d6 points of damage from these spikes.

Amphibious (Ex): Although warturtles are aquatic, they can survive indefinitely on land.

Riders (Ex): While wearing an exotic saddle, a Large warturtle may carry upon its back one Medium or smaller humanoid creature, usually its owner or trainer, with no penalty. Riders take no damage from the turtle's spiked plates.

Skills: A warturtle has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform a special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it moves in a straight line.

WHITE HART

Large Magical Beast
Hit Dice: 7d10+14 (52 hp)
Initiative: +7
Speed: 80 ft. (16 squares)
Armor Class: 18 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural, +4 deflection), touch 16, flat-footed 15
Base Attack/Grapple: +7/+16
Attack: Gore +11 melee (1d12+5)
Full Attack: Gore +11 melee (1d12+5) and 2 hooves +11 (1d8+5)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Powerful charge, trample 2d6+5
Special Qualities: Arrows foil, darkvision 60 ft., damage reduction 5/magic, leap between worlds
Saves: Fort +7, Ref +10, Will +2
Abilities: Str 20, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 18

Skills: Escape Artist +14*, Hide +8, Jump +25, Listen +16, Move Silently +9, Spot +16
Feats: Alertness, Dash[B], Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes
Environment: Any forest
Organization: Solitary or herd (2–8)
Challenge Rating: 5
Treasure: —
Alignment: Usually chaotic good
Advancement: 8–12 HD (Large); 13–16 HD (Huge)
Level Adjustment: —

This proud deer has white fur, reddish ears, and ivory antlers. It gazes out with a noble bearing and wise eyes.

Also called white stags or elven deer, white harts live in the forests that border both the mortal world and the realms of faerie and the elves and walk freely between the two. Elven heroes are the only ones known to ride them. Female white deer are called white does; they are even less often seen than the white harts.

Those who successfully track a white hart often find adventure at the end of the trail. The deer have ways of leading their pursuants to lost relatives, holy sites, great treasures, and mortal danger. At least among the elves, adventurous souls always take their appearance as a good omen, while more timid elves avoid pursuing a white hart and abandon their travels for the day as soon as they spot one.

White harts speak Sylvan.

COMBAT

A white hart prefers to avoid combat whenever possible unless it has a rider who asks it to ride into combat. To avoid combat, a white hart uses its superior speed and stealth in the forest. Once combat is joined, it uses both antlers and hooves to slash and trample foes.

Arrow's Foil (Su): The half-world nature of a white hart grants it a deflection bonus to its Armor Class (although it is not incorporeal) and grants it some protection from normal arrows. Against ranged weapons it has DR 10/magic.

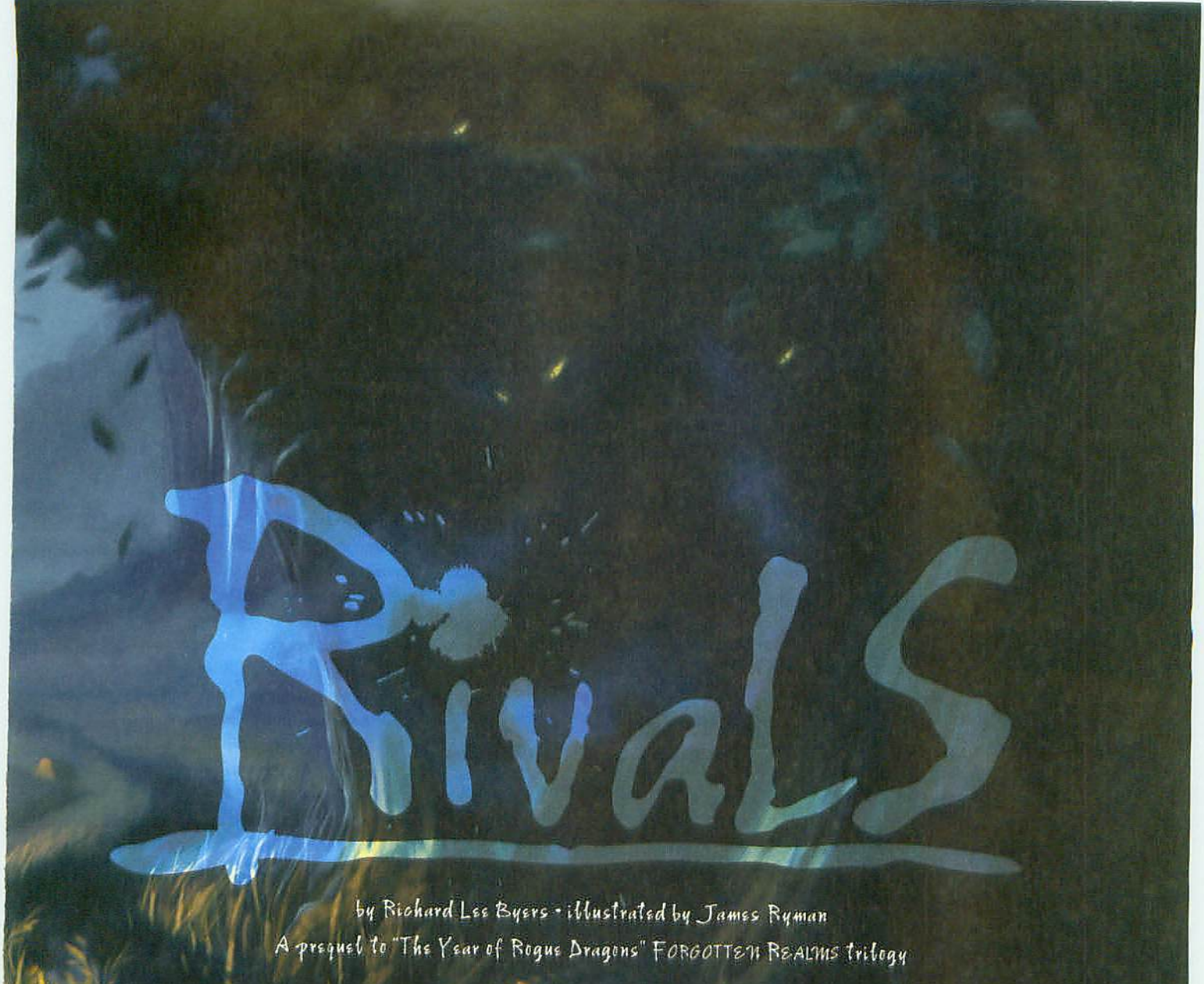
Leap Between Worlds (Su): A white hart can plane shift as a swift action when in a forest that contains elves or fey creatures, moving from the Material Plane to Arborea, the Beastlands, Ysgard, or vice versa. It can carry one Large, two Medium, or four Small riders while doing so.

Trample (Ex): A white hart can leap on and trample foes for 2d6+5 points of damage, although it usually only does so when cornered or when its rider demands it. DC 18 Reflex for half. The save DC is Strength-based.

Skills: White harts gain a +8 racial bonus on Escape Artist, Listen, and Spot checks.

TAMING A WHITE HART

Few hunters ever catch a glimpse of a white hart, much less ride one. They slip from every trap and snare, and they are quicker than the fastest horse, especially among the thick undergrowth of the old forests they favor. Yet sometimes a young white hart is captured and raised by the wildest or oldest tribes of elves, whose maidens tame a mother deer and help to raise the young during harsh winters or times of famine. Training a white hart to be ridden requires six months and a DC 20 Handle Animal skill check. Even then, they rarely accept cruel or overly strict riders for long. Training a white hart for combat requires another six months and a DC 25 Handle Animal skill check.



Rivals

by Richard Lee Byers • illustrated by James Ryman

A prequel to "The Year of Rogue Dragons" FORGOTTEN REALMS trilogy

By the time Dorn tramped up from the docks into the village, the confrontation was already underway. Hands on the hilts of their knives or dangling cudgels, half a dozen locals surrounded a dwarf. Like Dorn himself, the latter was plainly a traveler, laden with backpack and gear.

Dorn had little experience with dwarves, but even he could see this particular specimen was unusual. The dwarf wore his hair long and cut his beard short. Both were a shining white, as was his fur tunic. His face, limbs, and bare feet were red, as if he'd suffered an agonizing sunburn.

The dwarf held his harpoon reversed, ready to strike with the butt instead of the point. Evidently he was cool-headed enough to realize it was a bad idea to kill one of the townsfolk even in self-defense, lest the entire hamlet set on him.

Dorn resolved to stay clear of the ugly scene. The Beastlord knew he'd been reckless to come to Pilver's Creek at all. It would be stupid indeed to compound the risk by antagonizing the natives. Besides, looking as he did, he'd encountered such hostility many a time, and when had anyone intervened on his behalf?

Never. And perhaps it was that thought that made him forsake prudence and stalk toward the bullies and their prey. Bullies all too intent on one another to notice his approach.

One of the ruffians swung his club. The dwarf sidestepped and rammed the butt of his harpoon into his attacker's gut. The man doubled over.

The other bullies rushed in, but by then Dorn was close enough to grab one by the scruff of the neck, fling him into a pair of his fellows, and knock them staggering.

"Enough!" he bellowed.

The toughs pivoted toward him, then froze. His misshapen, bladed iron arm and leg, and the iron half-mask sheathing his left profile, made him a startling monstrosity.

Dorn hated the way people reacted to his appearance, but it gave him an edge in situations like this. "Go," he said, and the bullies scattered.

It wouldn't have surprised him if the dwarf had run as well, but instead, the squat, broad-shouldered stranger

grinned up at him. "Thank you," he said, in a voice almost as deep but considerably more musical than Dorn's rasp. "I'm Raryn Snowstealer." He offered his hand.

Dorn hesitated, then briefly clasped the dwarf's callused fingers with his hand of flesh and bone. "I'm Dorn Graybrook, and you don't need to thank me. I didn't do anything much." He started to turn away.

"Are you the sheriff, or someone similar? Is that why you helped me?"

Dorn spat. "This is the Moonsea, Goodman Snowstealer. It's not likely any town official would put himself out to stop his own folk harassing a stranger. Especially here, andespecially you."

The dwarf cocked his head. "What do you mean?"

"The city of Hillsfar controls this hamlet, and in Hillsfar, they hate dwarves, halflings... everyone but humans. If you're smart, you'll clear out." And if Dorn had any sense, he'd do the same.

"Is it actually illegal for me to be here?"

"Well, no. Not as far as I know."

"Then I'll stay. I have business. Supposedly, the village needs a hunter."

"What?" Dorn felt stupid with surprise. "I journeyed here to earn that bounty."

"Did you indeed? Then I have a proposal. Why don't we work together and split the gold?"

"No. I don't need a partner."

Raryn put away his smile, and his tone cooled. "Suit yourself. Let's find the man in charge and let him decide which of us he wants to hire."

They walked on in silence, past a cook's boy shucking freshwater oysters, a trapper scraping a pelt, and a boatwright burning the core out of a log to make a canoe. Everyone stared, and as always, Dorn resented it, and hated himself for his freakishness.

At the moment, he likewise despised himself for helping Raryn. What a dunce he was, to aid a rival! He took what comfort he could from the reflection that an officer from Hillsfar was unlikely to employ a nonhuman.

The officer was easy to find. He lived in the grandest house, a three-story post-and-beam structure with a view of the purple-blue waters of the harbor. The travelers gave their names and explained their business to the youthful sentry stationed at the door, who ushered them in to see his commander a few moments later.

"Stevvin Hightower, Captain of the Red Plumes of Hillsfar and Mayor of Pilver's Creek," the guard proclaimed, his voice cracking.

To Dorn's surprise, the thin, sharp-nosed man behind the desk appeared to be more of a wizard than a warrior. He wore a robe with an abundance of pockets for talismans and such, and a spiral-carved ebony wand lay within easy reach of his hand. Meanwhile, looking dustier than the grimoires and scroll cases on his shelves, his breastplate, sword, and scarlet-crested helm reposed on a stand in the far corner.

He wore a robe with an abundance of pockets for talismans and such, and a spiral-carved ebony wand lay within easy reach of hand.

Stevvin studied his callers through hooded eyes, perhaps in the hope the prolonged scrutiny would unsettle them. Finally he said, "So. The notorious Dorn Graybrook. Don't you realize you still stand accused of murdering your master? It's beyond question that you ran away before completing your term of indenture. Thus, I'm astonished that you'd venture within fifty miles of a company of Red Plumes."

"I wouldn't go back to the city," Dorn replied, "but this isn't Hillsfar. It's a backwater on the edge of a marsh, important only for the furs, herbs, snakeskins, and crawfish it produces. Except that it doesn't produce so much of them anymore, because a dragon has started killing the locals when they venture into the swamp. As mayor, you need to set the situation right.

"I can help. Probably you watched me kill dangerous beasts in the arena. I've killed more since, all around the Moonsea, for anyone willing to pay. So put me to use. It will do you more good than trying to arrest me."

Stevvin's mouth twisted. "I don't care for your arrogance, but perhaps you have a point. All right, then. I'll ignore your past misdeeds—"

"Captain," Raryn said, "with all respect, how can you be sure of choosing wisely if you don't even bother to learn anything about me?"

"Because the half-golem is right," Stevvin said. "I have witnessed his prowess. I've also seen enough of you to form an impression."

"You've seen I'm a dwarf," Raryn replied, "and you have contempt for my kind. So be it. Your prejudice doesn't concern me. But if the reports I heard speak true, the wyrm you're after is a white."

"Yes," Stevvin said. "We don't understand what it's doing here, as opposed to infesting some icy mountaintop or tundra. But I've seen evidence it freezes some of its victims with its breath, so I'm reasonably certain of the species."

"I grew up on the Great Glacier," Raryn said, "where such wyrms are common. I've hunted them before. Can you say the same, Dorn Graybrook?"

Dorn scowled. "No. But—"

Raryn shifted his gaze back to Stevvin. "Consider this, also. Dragons are good at hiding. How will our friend here find it if it doesn't want to be found?"

Stevvin snorted. "It isn't shy. It attacks people when it sees them. That's the problem."

"It attacks those who have no hope of hurting it. It may well choose to avoid a company of warriors, or to wait, watch, and attack when it has you at a disadvantage. But because I'm an able tracker, with a store of hunter's charms to sharpen my senses, I can keep it from doing that. Again, I ask if Dorn Graybrook can claim the same?"

"Since I left Hillsfar," said Dorn, "I've been learning to track." It sounded weak even to him.

Stevvin studied the two of them once more, then said, "I promised a thousand in gold to the hunter or hunters who could lead my Red Plumes to the wyrm, then spearhead the effort to slaughter it. So I'll take both of you, and divide the coin afterward based on your relative contributions."

"That's fine with me," said Raryn.

It wasn't fine with Dorn, but he, too, agreed to the arrangement. He consoled himself with the thought that dragonslaying was dangerous. It was entirely possible Raryn wouldn't survive to collect his share of the bounty.

The hunting party set forth under gray autumn skies, with a chilly breeze gusting out of the north. Despite the fading of the year, however, the swamp was still riotous with life. Vines crawled up the trunks of the oaks and willows. Yellow and purple wildflowers dotted the soft ground, birds called, and the black water in the channels splashed when fish and otters broke the surface.

Dorn and Raryn prowled at the head of the column, looking for sign. Next came Stevvin, treading gingerly, as if he imagined he could traverse the marsh without getting mud on his boots and the hem of his robe. He'd donned his red-crested helm and sword, perhaps as a concession to military decorum, but dispensed with the body armor that might otherwise have hindered his spellcasting.

Behind him trudged thirty men-at-arms, edgy and reluctant, as well they might be. From time to time, they whispered and sniggered about the duo in the lead: the hulking freak who was human on one side and iron on the other, and the squat little dwarf with his mane of white. It occurred to Dorn that he must look even stranger walking beside such a companion, and afterward he resented Raryn for that as well.

If Raryn sensed Dorn's ill will, his manner didn't betray it. Instead, he pointed out bent blades of grass, scratches on bark, the way a crane croaking off to the west abruptly fell silent. Most of it had nothing to do with the dragon, but rather, the comings and goings of ordinary animals. At first, Dorn didn't understand the point of such blather, but eventually it struck him.

"You're trying to teach me," he said. "Why?"

Raryn shrugged. "You said you wanted to learn to track. I thought that if I helped, I might make amends for horning in on the job you wanted all to yourself. Although I still don't understand why. Do you need all of Stevvin's gold so badly?"

"No." Dorn realized he didn't quite know himself why he'd been so opposed to having Raryn around. The dwarf simply made him uncomfortable, as people often did when they pretended to disregard his deformities. He actually preferred overt horror and scorn. At least they were honest.

"If you aren't desperate for money," Raryn asked, peering over a mossy log to check for snakes, then stepping across, "why are you here? I have an excuse. I'm new to the Moonsea. I didn't realize the men of Hillsfar hate my kind. But you knew you're a fugitive from their justice."

Dorn sought to evade the question by posing one of his own. "Why did you come to the Moonsea? I think you may be the first of your sort who ever did. I never even heard of a dwarf like you before."

Raryn smiled. "I hail from a place where all is ice, snow, and rock. But traders come sometimes, with tales of green fields and forests, and cities a hundred times bigger than even our largest village. I grew curious to see them. Tell me this. Why does a city man like you choose hunting as his trade?"

"Why not?" Especially considering that killing beasts was the only thing he'd ever learned to do.

The dwarf chuckled. "You're plainly averse to answering personal questions. Fair enough. We'll talk about the marsh, and the task at hand. Look at that patch of moss...."

They found the tracks not long after.

As Dorn peered down at the huge impressions, his iron fist clenched until the talons rasped on the palm. His heart hammered until Raryn said, "Not a dragon after all, then."

Dorn felt as if someone had emptied a pail of cold water over him. "What?"

"The toes are too thick in proportion to their length, and the claws are too blunt."

Dorn's body clenched. He'd traveled the length of the Moonsea, risked associating with Red Plumes—and if Raryn was right—all based on a false assumption. He ached to hit something.

Stevvin advanced. A low-hanging branch snagged the dyed horsehair crest of his helmet and pulled it askew, and his mouth tightened in annoyance. "You say our quarry is not a wyrm? You're certain?"

"Yes," Raryn replied. "But it is something big and serpent-ish, a hydra. If it's freezing folk with its breath, a cryohydra."

Stevvin grunted. "Whatever it is, I need it killed, and I'm tired of wading aimlessly through this mire. Can you track the creature now?"

"Yes," Raryn said.

As they trekked onward, the dwarf glanced up at Dorn. "You're disappointed it's not a wyrm. Why? Hydras are at least a little easier to kill."

Because a dragon killed my parents and tore my arm and leg off, Dorn thought, and then my master made me a freak with iron parts and sent me to the arena. Because I've promised myself I'll slaughter wyrms whenever I can.

But he didn't care to talk about such things, and so he simply ignored the question.

Still shrouded in cloud, the luminous smudge that was the sun slipped down the western sky until it grazed the treetops. Finally, Raryn raised his hand, signaling a halt, then gestured for everyone to gather in. "We're close," he whispered. "I'm going to scout ahead. I need everyone to keep quiet until I return."

Stevvin nodded. "Go."

Crouching low, Raryn crept forward. In moments, he vanished into the brush, with nary a quiver of a branch or the snap of a twig to betray his passage.

Just as Dorn started to wonder if the dwarf had come to grief, he reappeared. "It's there," Raryn said, pointing, "about a hundred paces distant. Hidden in a low place in the middle of some oaks. The trees give it cover, but to the east, they're far enough apart that we can shoot between them. Everyone needs to sneak up there silently, then attack on my signal."

"Very well," Stevvin said.

"Can you burn it with fire magic?" Raryn asked.

"Yes."

"Good. Save at least one such spell to blast it after it goes down. Hydras heal fast, like trolls. I've seen them spring back up and kill folk when, by rights, they ought to be dead. Searing the wounds keeps that from happening." Raryn took a last appraising look at his companions. "All right, let's go."

Dorn and the Red Plumes made more noise than Raryn had skulking through the underbrush. Still, they managed to be reasonably quiet; they reached the eastern rim of the bowl in the earth without alerting the cryohydra.

Big as a peasant's cottage, the purplish reptile resembled a dragon, but with five wedge-shaped heads at the ends of as many serpentine necks; the creature did not possess any wings. It was a daunting sight and would have been even more so, except that it gave a general impression of torpor. The beast lay on its belly with its heads drooping and its amber eyes nearly closed. Dorn wondered if it had recently gorged on some prodigious meal.

Raryn looked up and down the line, making sure everyone had an arrow nocked. "Shoot!" he bellowed.

The volley droned through the air. Some of the shafts slammed into the hydra's body, and some rebounded from its leathery hide. An instant later, Stevvin seared it with a bright, crackling bolt of lightning.

The cryohydra convulsed then heaved itself to its feet, five heads hissing and roaring. Its jaws spread wide and spat jets of milky frost. Dorn twisted, caught one such stream on his all-but-impervious metal side, and suffered only a momentary chill. A Red Plume tried to duck behind a tree, but he was too slow. The cold seared him, and he dropped.

"Keep shooting!" Raryn yelled.

Dorn did, all the while wondering what ailed the cryohydra. The reptile was healing, but the process wasn't pushing the arrows out of its body or covering over its lightning burns with new hide as quickly as he'd expected. Nor did it commence its charge up the incline with the speed he'd come to know and dread in the arena. Perhaps it wasn't just stuffed full of meat, but sick.

Diseased or hale, however, it wasn't ready to fall down, so Dorn set aside his bow and drew his hand-and-a-half sword, just as Raryn was readying his long-handled axe. It was their job to interpose themselves between the hydra and their comrades, to engage it in close combat while the wizard and Red-Plume bowmen continued attacking at range.

"Ready?" asked Raryn. He looked and sounded calm as a stone, Dorn had to give him that. The half-golem answered with a nod, and they ran at the reptile.

Two of the hydra's heads snapped forward, vomiting frost. Dorn defended as he had before, halting and pivoting to catch the blast on his armored half. Raryn simply ignored the attack and kept running. Evidently his people were immune to cold.

Dorn dashed on, and caught up to Raryn by virtue of his longer legs. They came within reach of the hydra at the same time. They dodged snapping jaws, stamping feet, and its lashing tail, and cut and chopped whenever they could.

Finally, bristling with arrows, the hydra spilled forward, crashing down on its belly. The heads at the ends of its long necks thudded to the ground. The Red Plumes cheered.

Dorn glanced around, looking for Stevvin. He wanted to remind the wizard to burn the carcass, then saw that he needn't bother. Stevvin was already gesturing and reciting rhyming words of power. He thrust out his hand, and a spark leaped from his fingertips.

Straight at Raryn and Dorn.

Dorn realized that when the magic detonated, the blast would engulf them. "Watch out!" he shouted, and scrambled to the side.

Dorn wasn't fast enough. With a boom, the spark exploded into flame and swallowed him in blinding glare and heat. He staggered onward, stunned, hurting, and terrified, finally realizing his clothing was on fire and he needed to drop and roll.

Dorn flung himself back and forth, smothering the flames, but by that time, Red Plumes were rushing in. He tried to heave himself up into a fighting stance, but the pain of his burns made him slow. Jabbing spear shafts and kicking boots found his soft human parts and hammered him down into darkness.

When he woke, the whole world was dark; a few stars gleamed through the branches. Campfires leaped and crackled, scenting the air with their smoke. He was sitting up with his back pressed against the rough bark of a sizable tree, a coarse rope binding him in place.

His throat was parched, as painful as any of his blisters or bruises. Still, after a swallow or two, he managed to croak out Raryn's name.

A groan sounded close at hand. Evidently the dwarf was tied to the other side of the tree.

Neither of them had been particularly loud, but even so, the noise drew Stevvin and one of his warriors. The soldier stepped to Raryn's side of the tree and Dorn heard water splashing. Dorn realized the Red Plume was pouring it over the dwarf's head in an effort to restore him to full consciousness. The sound gave Dorn another pang of thirst.

He glared up at Stevvin. "You treacherous whoreson."

Stevvin shook his head as if in pity. "I can't believe you thought I'd give a

thousand pieces of Hillsfar gold to a murderous runaway bondsman and a dwarf. That would have been a true act of treachery. My superiors would have had my head. So instead, my men and I will share the bounty among ourselves, and you and the dwarf will go to the city in chains."

Raryn laughed a gravelly laugh. "You may want to hold off on divvying up the coin," he said. "Seeing as how you haven't earned it yet."

Stevvin stalked around the tree to confront the dwarf. "What are you babbling about?" he demanded.

"The hydra we killed was sluggish," Raryn said. "Because it was getting ready to lay eggs. The hollow was its nest."

"What of it?" Stevvin said.

"When it comes to mating," Raryn said, "hydras are more like dragons or birds than snakes. The male looks after the female and the young. You still have such a creature inhabiting the marsh. As it turns out, those were its tracks we followed. They were too big to belong to the beast we killed."

"Then why," asked Stevvin, "didn't you tell me about the male before?"

"Because I was trying to say as little as possible," Raryn answered, "lest the female hear us. I'm telling you now. The male was off hunting when we found the nest, but he will return soon enough, and when he discovers the body of his mate, he will come after us. Set Dorn and me free, and we'll help you deal with him."

Stevvin remained silent for a moment, then snorted. "You're lying. The tracks looked big enough to me." He strode away, and the soldier followed.

"Idiot," Raryn sighed.

"It's true, then?" asked Dorn.

"Yes. Pardon me. I'm feeling faint. I need to cast a healing charm." The dwarf murmured a rhyme, and a sweet scent of greenery suffused the air. "There. Now I won't pass out on you. Look, I've seen that the iron arm makes you stronger than any normal human, and it's got claws to boot. Make sure nobody's watching, then try to get yourself free."

Heedless of the way the effort made his various injuries twinge and throb, Dorn strained with all his might. To no avail. "Sorry. The rope's too tight and too well tied. I can't shift my sharp parts into position to cut it."

"I can't break or loosen it either," Raryn said. "But I have an idea, if we can circle around within reach of each other. You slide right and I'll go left."

"All right." Once again, Dorn struggled against his bonds, digging his hands into the ground to shift himself along a fraction of an inch at a time. The rope scraped him, and the effort made him pant.

"Earlier today," Raryn murmured, "I asked why a city man like you becomes a hunter. I had my answer when we faced the hydra. You fought well. Like a man who relishes such challenges." He spoke in the approving tone of someone

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who imagined he'd discovered a kindred spirit.

Dorn sneered, not at the dwarf but at himself. "I relish the killing. My parents would have said that makes me evil. But it's all I'm fit for." He shifted a hair farther. "Except that's a joke, isn't it? I'm not really even any good at this trade. I couldn't read the sign or tell there were two hydras, any more than Stevvin could."

"I've no complaints of you," Raryn said. "To the contrary. Here we are. Close enough. Give me your hand."

Dorn managed to touch the dwarf's fingers, whereupon Raryn whispered another healing charm. A warmth tingled up Dorn's arm, dulling the pain of his injuries and even easing his thirst.

"Now," Raryn said, "I'm going to make you stronger and more nimble." He chanted softly. The enchantments burned Dorn's muscles and made them jump. "Try again to cut the ropes."

Dorn writhed, striving to lift his iron hand high enough to reach his bonds. He doubted that Raryn's spells had actually made his metal limbs stronger or more flexible. But by doing as much for his human side, they'd made it easier to squirm his entire body about, and finally he snagged the bottommost coil with the claw at the end of his thumb.

He scratched at it until it parted. The next one was a little easier, and the one after that, easier still.

"Nicely done," Raryn said, casting about, making sure no one had noticed them freeing themselves. "Now all we have to do is sneak away. The Red Plumes won't be able to follow us through the marsh at night. Without a scout to guide them, they won't even dare to try."

They rose from among the severed lengths of rope and skulked toward a black, tangled stand of trees. With every step, Dorn expected someone to shout that the prisoners were escaping. But no one did. It was dark and, weary from a taxing march and the fight that followed, the Red Plumes were far from vigilant. Most were already snoring in their blankets.

Thus, Dorn and Raryn slipped into the trees without incident. Then a ghastly screeching, rising from several sources—several throats—at once, knifed through the drone and murmur of the camp at their backs.

Then a ghastly screeching... knifed through the drone and murmur of the camp at their backs.

Dorn spun around. He couldn't see in the dark like a dwarf, but the firelight revealed that while he and Raryn had been sneaking toward one side of the camp, the male hydra had crept up on it from the other.

As Raryn had warned, the reptile was half again as large as its mate had been, with seven heads instead of five. It spewed blasts of frost, one of which extinguished a fire and froze the men huddled around it. Then, it rushed into the center of the encampment. Its serpentine heads struck in several directions at once, biting warriors to pieces or lifting them high, chewing them, and swallowing them down. People started screaming and scurrying about.

Lady Luck smiled on Raryn and me, thought Dorn. All we have to do is keep moving. The male won't come after us, not with all the Red Plumes to occupy it.

And yet, although the hydra wasn't a dragon, it was very like one. The filthy thing even had a breath weapon.

He looked down at his companion. "These bastards betrayed us," he said, "and the clods in the village are no better. We owe them nothing."

"I agree," Raryn said. "But you and I are hunters, and we came here to measure ourselves against this quarry. I'm still game. Are you?"

"It's crazy," said Dorn, "but yes."

They ran back into the camp, past wide-eyed, ashen-faced men bolting the other way. *Weapons,* thought Dorn. He and Raryn needed their weapons. He hadn't actually seen what had become of them, but he had noticed at which fire Stevvin had chosen to sup and spread his bedroll. Since the weapons constituted plunder, it seemed likely the captain had taken charge of them and kept them close at hand.

He spied Stevvin and the weapons at the same time. The magician stood paralyzed, gawking only at the hydra. It would be the easiest thing in the world to kill him.

Instead, Dorn grabbed Stevvin by the shoulders and shook him. "Fight!" he shouted.

Stevvin blinked. "I already used my most powerful spells... I haven't had a chance to prepare new ones."

"Rally your men," said Dorn, "then use whatever magic you have left." He snatched up his sword, while Raryn retrieved his axe and harpoon, and they charged the hydra.

Dorn had to break stride twice to defend against the reptile's freezing spittle. As a result, Raryn reached the creature ahead of him.

The dwarf dropped his harpoon on the ground, then chopped at the hydra's foreleg with his axe. Jaws spreading wide, one of the serpentine heads shot down at him. He yanked his weapon free, sidestepped, and cut into the reptile's neck.

So far, so good, but Raryn didn't seem to notice another head snaking around to take him from behind. With his mismatched legs, Dorn wasn't a particularly fast runner, but he put on a final burst of speed, closed, gripped the hilt of his sword with both hands, and cut, all but severing the head. The hydra shrieked. The injured neck flailed and flopped about, spraying blood.

Raryn glanced around. "Thanks, he said.

Dorn kept his armored half turned toward the hydra, iron arm extended to block, claw, and punch with the knuckle spikes. Then, when the reptile gave him an opening, he stepped through and

cut with his sword, concentrating on whatever neck was within reach. It was a peculiarity of hydras that it was easier to kill them by cutting off the heads, as opposed to hammering stroke after stroke into the rapidly healing body. Raryn must have known it too, for he focused on the same targets.

The problem was that the only way to shear through the thick, muscular necks and the vertebrae inside was to put all of one's weight and strength behind the blow, and that in turn made it difficult to recover. Dorn lopped off one head, but afterward lurched off balance, his human foot sliding in the mud. Another set of jaws lined with dagger fangs plunged down at him from above, and, floundering, he couldn't pivot and come on guard in time to defend against them.

Raryn scrambled to interpose himself between Dorn and the threat. He struck, and his axe bit deep into the hydra's snout. It shrieked and jerked back its injured portion.

"Stay close," Raryn said. "So we can protect one another when we need it."

He was right. As they fought on, arrows thumped into the hydra's body, and Stevvin pierced it with darts of azure light. Perhaps the harassment was doing the creature some harm, but not enough to distract it from the foes directly in front of it.

Dorn never again managed to decapitate the hydra with a single blow. Neither did Raryn. But two or three strokes could do it if they landed in the same place. One by one, the yellow-eyed heads slammed to the ground. Cognizant only of the moment and the immediate threats and opportunities it presented, Dorn lost count of the fallen heads. In the end, it took him a moment to realize he'd severed the last of them, and that the reptile's knees were buckling.

By that time Raryn was running toward the harpoon he'd taken the trouble to retrieve, yet never bothered to use against the hydra. He picked it up and threw it.

The lance slammed into Stevvin's right shoulder and knocked him on his rump. "Let's see you cast spells when you can't flap your arm," panted Raryn. He raced toward the captain, and Dorn pounded after him.

It all caught the remaining Red Plumes by surprise, and they were accordingly slow to react. It gave Dorn time to heave Stevvin to his feet and poise his claws at his throat.

"I don't want to kill him," said Dorn. "But I will unless you lay down your bows."

"You don't need to do this," said Stevvin, his voice thick with pain. "I give you my word—"

"Keep it," said Raryn. "You've already shown us what your word is worth." He looked at the Red Plumes. "Don't fret about us. Take brands from the fire and char the stumps at the ends of the hydra's necks. Otherwise, the heads will grow back."

The soldiers looked at one another, then dropped their bows and scurried to do as the dwarf had suggested.

After that, it was just a matter of holding Stevvin hostage until they collected the gold and embarked in Dorn's little sailboat. Once they were out of bowshot of the shore, and certain no other vessels were chasing after them, they set the wizard, bound and gagged, adrift in a canoe.

Dorn turned to Raryn. "I'm headed for Thentia," he said, "but I'll take you wherever you want to go."

Then they'd part, and he'd be alone again. He reminded himself he was better off that way, that people, even when they pretended to see past his ugliness, always disappointed him. Still, to his surprise and dismay, the thought of bidding farewell to his new companion weighed on him like a stone.

Raryn shrugged. "I don't have anyplace special to go. The truth is, you know the Moonsea, and I know the wild. I still think we'd make good partners."

Dorn clenched the human side of his face to keep himself from grinning like a fool. "I suppose we could try it," he said.

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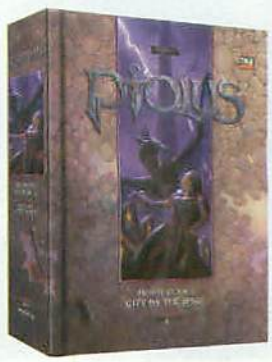

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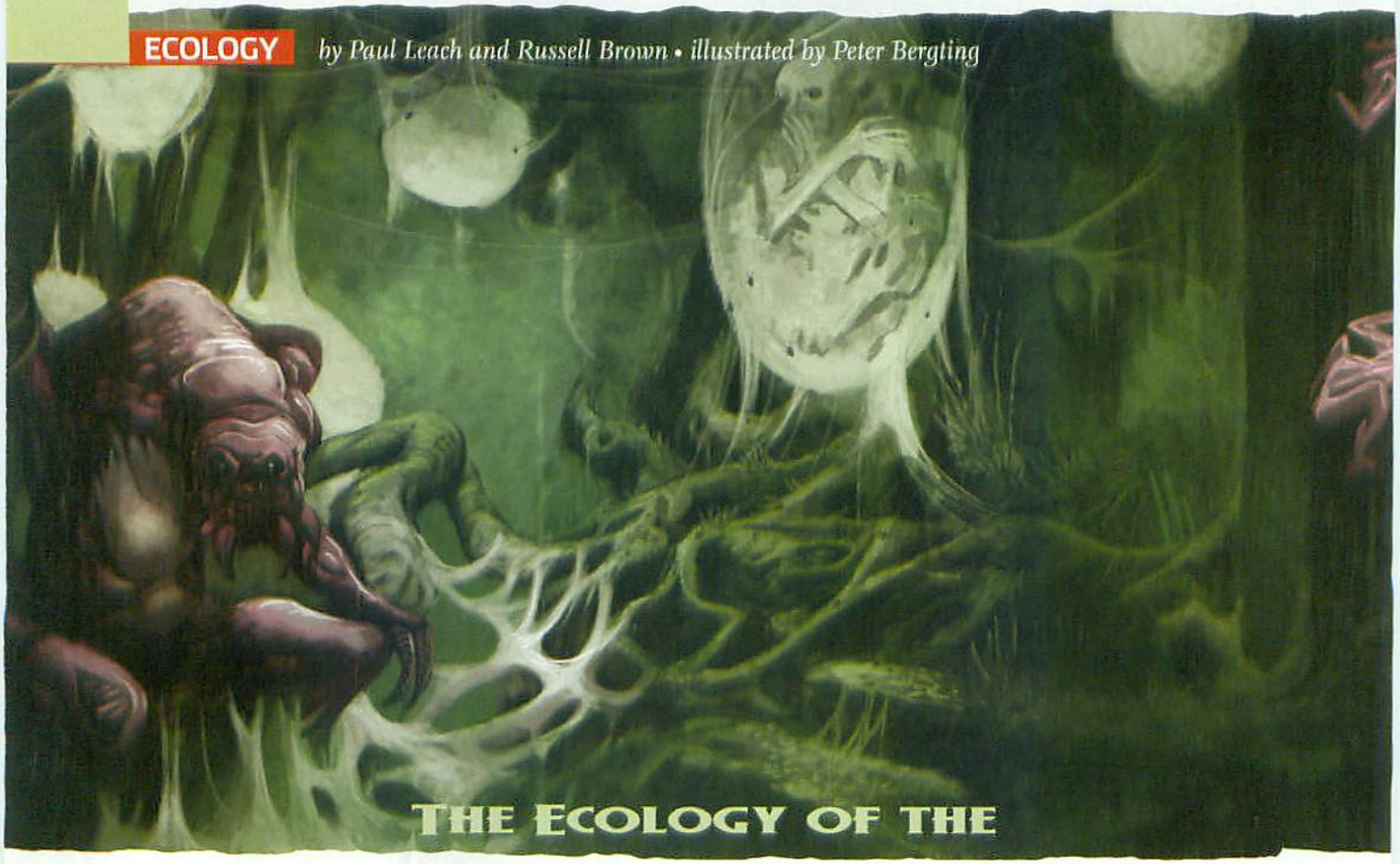


THE ECOLOGY OF THE ETTERCAP

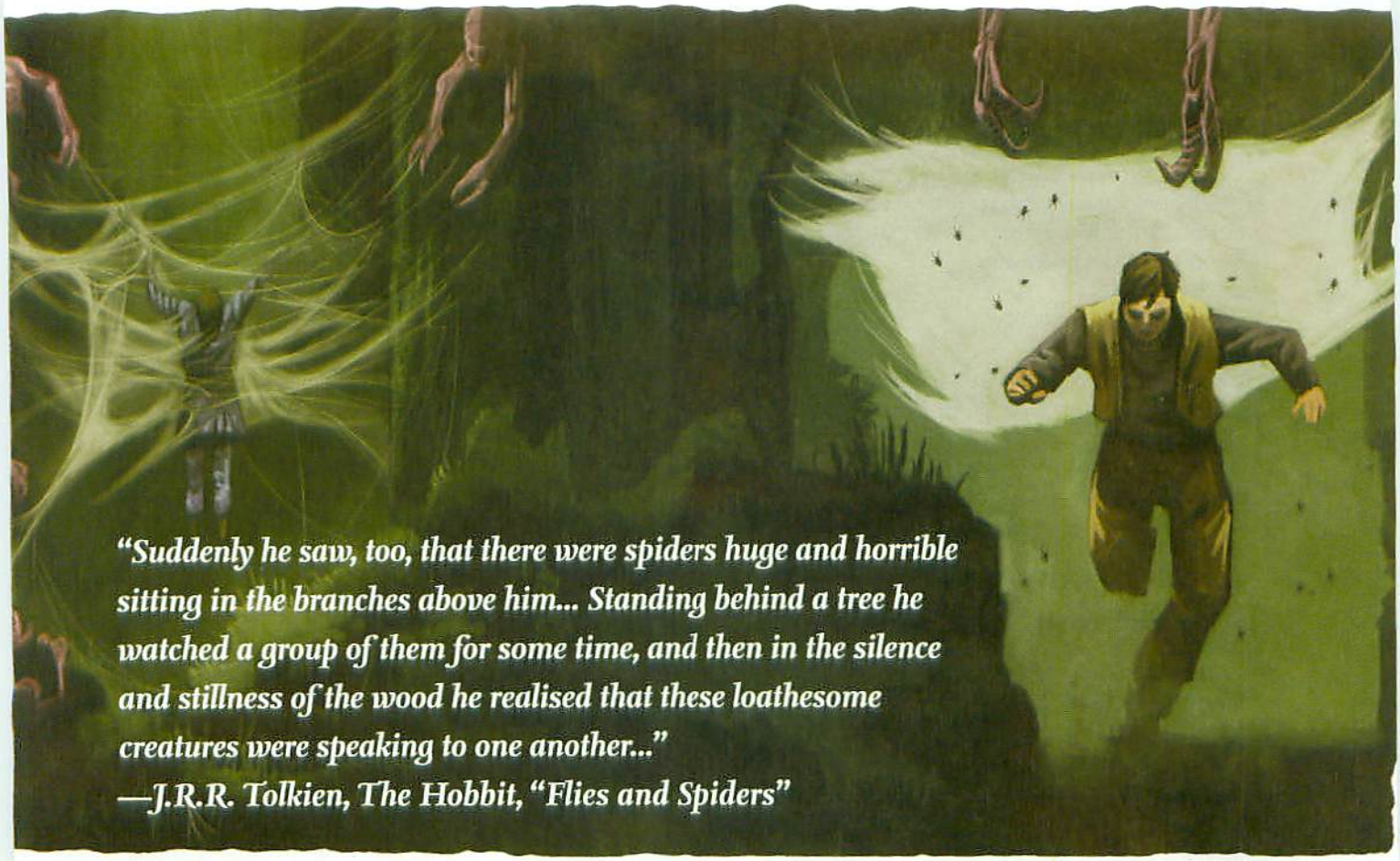
In the darkened tangles of the deepest forest mazes, where eldritch boughs create an endless green night, hang the grasping webs of the degenerate ettercap. Gifted with the cunning patience and bloodthirsty tenacity of the spiders they so closely resemble, ettercaps are master predators and trappers with few peers. Perverted and alien, they attempt to blend in with the natural world. Parasites trying to pass as children of nature, their terrible forms and insatiable, verminous hunger for warm flesh belie their true spirits.

HISTORY OF THE ETTERCAP

Most people believe ettercaps somehow evolved or were magically manipulated from arachnid stock, but their horrible origins in fact occurred well outside of any natural order. Predictably, drow experimentation is often presumed in these beings' genesis, yet the worshipers of Lolth fervently and disgustedly deny the Spider Queen's involvement. The truth, however, lies less in external evils and more in the simple, willing corruption of what was once a pure intention.

Upon great menhirs and carved upon living guardians, pulses the vast, cultic knowledge of the druids. Within their secret circles, druids worship all facets of the world's being, and for each of nature's countless aspects there are corresponding druidic rituals and inspired ceremonies. One such fragment of ancient natural lore mentions a secret cannibalistic tradition, a disgusting rite overlooked or marginalized by many nature worshipers. There were once—and some say still are—druidic sects that adhered to these natural truths of betrayal and blood. One such fleshtearing sect is held responsible for fathering the ettercap race.

These deranged druids embraced vile aspects of nature, particularly the invasive, fecund, and unkillable virtues of vermin. Thus, in a time long past, when a terrible spider fiend came upon their ranks, the druids took its presence as the ultimate validation of nature, seeing the monstrosity as a



"Suddenly he saw, too, that there were spiders huge and horrible sitting in the branches above him... Standing behind a tree he watched a group of them for some time, and then in the silence and stillness of the wood he realised that these loathesome creatures were speaking to one another..."
—J.R.R. Tolkien, The Hobbit, "Flies and Spiders"

prophet and embodiment of all they held sacred. What this foul being was remains disputed. Perhaps it was some demonic bebilith or even a corrupt servant of the ancient demon prince Mishka the Wolf Spider. Regardless, the foul thing delighted in the adoration of an army of devout—if insane—fanatics.

At the behest of the new avatar of its faith, the murderous cult began indulging in increasingly arachnid practices. What began as living in webs and with spiders turned to eating living spiders and imbibing venom, and finally to taking demon-brewed magical infusions and adopting arachnid grafts. Eventually, these broken-minded druids gained a measure of kinship with the arachnids they revered. Slowly, by degrees, they lost their humanity.

At some point, the fiendish leader of the spider cult was either slain or grew bored and departed. The druids, however, retained their corrupt, false faith and rituals. Eventually, from inbred generations of malformed, envenomed, and increasingly heavily grafted devotees emerged the first true ettercaps. Over time, these "perfect born" came to outnumber the humanoid members of their order, and what had been the quest and religion of their ancestors was forgotten. Having no need to attain a more arachnid state, ettercaps abandoned their druidic traditions and forgot their forebearers, embracing their instincts, hunting and living as spiders, exulting and indulging in the profane knowledge of their perverse perfection.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE ETTERCAP

The following table shows the results of a Knowledge (dungeoneering) check as it relates to ettercaps. Those who study arachnids or aberrations, as well as those who inhabit or make their living in the forest, are most likely to possess this information.

Knowledge (dungeoneering)

DC	Result
10	Ettercaps are evil forest-dwelling creatures that resemble bloated humanoids with distorted arachnid features.
15	Ettercaps create and hunt with webs, ensnaring prey in their sticky folds. They surround themselves with arachnid pets and prefer to eat live prey.
20	Like many spiders, ettercaps are venomous, possessing a poisonous bite that stiffens and slows victims. Despite their horrific appearance, ettercaps are relatively intelligent and speak Common.
25	Ettercaps are skilled at climbing, hiding, and trapmaking. Typically loners, they riddle their territories with snares and traps incorporating their webs and venom, waiting until victims are defenseless before approaching.

PHYSIOLOGY OF THE ETTERCAP

An ettercap looks like nothing so much as a disgustingly bruised, rotund, humanoid warped with arachnid features and mounted with a multitude of insectial eyes. Sickeningly pale, sagging skin covers its bloated abdomen while

ETTERCAP BROOD SWARM

Countless tiny horrors gibber and trample one another as they surge toward you, their features something between those of hairy black spiders and sickly pink newborn humans. Dozens of tiny mandibles click and chatter as they come, dripping a mixture of poison and anticipatory drool.

ETTERCAP BROOD SWARM **CR 3**

NE Tiny Aberration

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +6, Spot +5

AC 14 (+2 size, +2 Dex), touch 14, flat-footed 12

hp 18 (4 HD)

Fort +3, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4

Spd 15 ft. (3 squares), climb 15 ft.

Melee swarm (2d6 plus poison)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Base Atk +3; Grp —

Special Atk distraction

Abilities Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 2

Feats Alertness, Great Fortitude

Skills Climb +10, Listen +6, Spot +5

Environment warm forests

Organization solitary, tangle (2–4 swarms), or infestation (7–12 swarms)

Treasure none

Advancement none

When it hatches, an ettercap egg sack releases a swarm of starving, underdeveloped ettercap young. These malformed, pink hatchlings attack anything to sate their fetal hunger. See page 237 of the *Monster Manual* for special combat rules for swarms.

Combat

Distraction (Ex): Any living creature that begins its turn with an ettercap brood swarm in its square must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save is Constitution-based.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 14, initial and secondary damage 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Skills: An ettercap brood swarm has a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. It uses its Dexterity modifier instead of its Strength modifier for Climb checks. It can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened.

splotchy pinks and purples color the rest of its body.

Ettercap physiology relies on a blend of humanoid and arachnid organs and processes. An ettercap's prominent venom-injecting fangs conceal its near-human, yet totally fleshless, mouth. Its exposed teeth allow it to chew meat, while a hidden tubelike tongue allows it to drink its prey's bodily fluids. Like a true arachnid, an ettercap drools enzyme spittle on its meals to start the digestive process. Its muscular and flexible fangs display an ability to manipulate small items, and an ettercap sometimes uses them like a third hand when crafting traps and other items. Its clawed hands also show great versatility, despite their lack of opposable thumbs. With a few quick gyrations and clips, an ettercap quickly weaves, cuts, and casts web nets as speedily as its lower abdominal spinnerets looses strands.

Ettercaps conceive young through normal sexual reproduction, but the gestation and birth cycle results in a large external egg sac filled with scores of tiny ettercap young. These egg sacs are 2- to 3-foot ovoids, wrapped in sticky, protective webs, that allow them to be easily hung in clusters from cave walls, tree boughs, web structures, or other easily defensible locations. Upon hatching, a process that takes nearly three months, thirty to eighty tiny, half-formed ettercap young spill forth with ravenous intent. Ettercap mothers try to keep an immobile but living food source near the eggs—sometimes storing such a creature alive for weeks—so their newly hatched young don't cannibalize too many of their siblings. If a mother fails to find suitable prey, she flees to escape her starving children, returning only after the swarm has had time to sate itself or its numbers have thinned. Thus, these swarms of mindless newborn ettercaps can threaten not just those who stumble across a web-filled ettercap nursery, but whole regions (see the Ettercap Brood Swarm sidebar). In the weeks after hatching, the number of young ettercaps dwindles through exposure, starvation, birth defects, and the predation of their parents, their peers, and other creatures. The mother collects the most promising youngsters (no more than three) and raises them until they reach maturity in four years. The rest are left to their near-inevitable demises.

An ettercap grows throughout its life, possibly attaining Large size if it lives long enough. They can live for approximately 50 years, though, violence ends the lives of most ettercaps, before age 20.

PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIETY OF THE ETTERCAP

The ettercap's mixed arachnid-humanoid brain sets a natural limit on its emotional and intellectual capacity. Rooted in their collective consciousness, however, is a connection to arachnid life that extends far beyond shared appearance—a holdover from the druidic rites that ultimately inspired the race's creation. Ettercaps feel instinctually obligated to serve as a kind of warden to all arachnid life and to increase their own numbers. Excessive sentiment results in survival risks. Other ettercaps are only needed for breeding, and thus groups of ettercaps larger than a pair are rare. They believe that life and death serve as the only real, tangible truths, and

thus they do not recognize any deities or other moral codes. Religion and higher thought do not place victims in the web.

In some extraordinarily rare conditions, a particularly intelligent ettercap—usually a female—appears and gathers a large number of ettercaps and other arachnids around her. These leaders are often motivated, by destructive humanoid incursions and great loss of arachnid life, to strike out from their webs and stalk prey back to its home. These forays can lead to whole humanoid communities besieged by swarms of ettercaps, monstrous spiders, spider swarms, and other arachnid monstrosities.

An ettercap acts as a lone shepherd in relation to other ettercaps and true spiders. As keepers of their kind, they dispose of (eat) the weak and sick, while nurturing the specimens most likely to thrive and fulfill their intended roles in nature. Their ability to commune with normal spiders results naturally from their inherited spider traits. To an arachnid, an ettercap is just another spider. Ettercaps exude powerful pheromones and bodily resins that have euphoric effects on other arachnids and mask any hint of residual humanity. Thus, spiders are more active and seem more content whenever an ettercap is near.

THE REAL HISTORY OF THE ETTERCAP

The name ettercap can be traced to the Old English word for spider, *attercoppe* ("atter" meaning "poison," and "coppe" meaning "head"). Middle English *coppe* (or *cob*) was synonymous for spider, as in cobweb or spider web. J.R.R. Tolkien gave this name to his intelligent spider monsters in *The Hobbit*.

Dungeons & Dragons ettercap first appeared in the original *Fiend Folio* and has been resurrected in every edition since. An Ettercap miniature also appeared as part of the *D&D Miniatures Giants of Legend* set.

Despite their isolationist attitudes and alien thoughts, ettercaps speak Common. They simply call it "The Old Tongue" and use it on the rare occasions they need to speak to one another or, more often, when they must communicate with outsiders. While ettercaps most often talk to humanoids when attempting to taunt or deceive their prey into following them into an ambush, ettercaps might try to parley their knowledge of the forest and its dangers when a superior enemy prevents their escape. Ettercaps sometimes use coins or other treasure as bait for humanoid prey, although few truly want such treasure for its own value.

ETTERCAP LAIRS

An ettercap's lair defines the creature as much as any of its traits and abilities. Its lair serves many purposes: shelter, food storage, and the nerve center of its trap system. An ettercap builds its cocoonlike home out of specially treated, hardened webbing camouflaged with branches and leaves and suspended from large boughs high in the forest canopy, allowing it to spend much of its time—like a spider—lying in wait.

Aside from shelter, a complex network of web strands runs from an ettercap's lair. Some of these might connect with the lairs of other ettercaps, directly linking several ettercaps in a region to a complex webcraft community. More commonly, a single strand of webbing connects each of an ettercap's traps to its lair. If a trap is disturbed, the strand shakes violently, alerting its creator to the disturbance

and leading him to investigate. Ettercaps regularly crisscross their territories with such strands, which prove so light and difficult to notice that many creatures disturb the webs without ever knowing. As such, an ettercap's lair serves not just as its home but as the center of a complex web that encompasses its entire territory. A character must make a DC 18 Search check to reveal the presence of these warning webs in a 5-foot square. Characters who have gained access to an ettercap's lair might also notice webs vibrating in alarm with a DC 18 Spot check, but they might not realize its meaning without making a DC 20 Knowledge (dungeoneering) or Knowledge (nature) check.

ETTERCAP WEB TRAPS

Insidiously imaginative and innately skilled, ettercaps are natural trap makers and create a wide range of booby traps and pitfalls. Usually incorporating their natural webbing and leftovers bits from past meals, some of these arachnid monstrosities' more cunning traps are detailed here.

Baited Limb and Poison Spikes: The most intelligent ettercaps have noticed that a humanoid creature, wrapped tight in webs and suspended as bait from a weakened tree limb, often attracts other humanoids. The victim moves out onto the limb, which breaks, dropping him and the bait into

ADVANCED ETTERCAP

Ettercap males most often advance by Hit Dice, becoming stronger, larger hunters. Females, typically being more intelligent, might advance by Hit Dice but frequently take levels in druid, fighter, ranger, rogue, or sorcerer. The Matriarch, presented here, would be a perfect candidate for a leader instigating an attack on a humanoid community.

THE MATRIARCH **CR 15**

Female ettercap druid 7/ vermin lord 4*
NE Medium aberration
Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +2, Spot +8
Language Common, Sylvan

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17
hp 100 (16 HD); 20 point swarm armor
Fort +9, **Ref** +4, **Will** +13

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares), climb 30 ft.
Melee bite +12 melee (1d8+2 plus blood drain and poison) and 2 claws +10 melee (1d3+1)
Base Atk +10; **Grp** +11
Special Attack blood drain, poison, web
Druid Spells Prepared (CL 9):
5th—*insect plague, tree stride*
4th—*dispel magic, giant vermin* (2)
3rd—*contagion* (DC 18), *greater magic fang, poison* (DC 18), *snare*
2nd—*barkskin, summon swarm* (3), *warp wood* (DC 17)
1st—*entangle* (2, DC 16), long strider, *jump, obscuring mist* (2)
0—*detect magic* (2), *detect poison* (2), *guidance, know direction*
Spell-like Abilities (CL 9):
1/day—*spider hand**

Abilities Str 14, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 20, Cha 12
SQ animal companion, chitin +2, spontaneous casting (*summon nature's ally* spells), swarm armor, vermin servant, wild empathy +8, wild shape 3/day
Feats Ability Focus (poison), Dodge, Great Fortitude, Multiattack, Natural Spell, Run
Skills Climb +17, Craft (trapmaking) +11, Hide +13 Listen +12, Knowledge (nature) +14, Move Silently +9, Ride +5, Spellcraft +6, Spot +16, Survival +12
Possession *bracers of armor +4, dusty rose prism ioun stone*

Blood Drain (Su): The Matriarch has enlarged mandibles. As part of her bite attack she can start a grapple without provoking an attack of opportunity. If successful, the mandibles automatically deal 2d6 points of damage each round as they suck blood from her victim. The blood drain ability only works on living creatures.
Chitin (Ex): The Matriarch has chitinous plates that grant her a +2 natural armor bonus.
Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 24, initial damage 1d6 Dex, secondary damage 2d6 Dex.
Swarm Armor (Su): Every day, upon regaining her spells, the Matriarch is covered by a swarm of spiders. These arachnids absorb up to 20 points of damage from any damaging attack (weapon or spell). The spiders die off when then they absorb such attacks. Swarm armor has no effect if the Matriarch is wearing armor.
Web (Ex): An entangled creature can escape one of the Matriarch's webs with a DC 20 Escape Artist check or burst the web with a DC 24 Strength check. See page 106 of the *Monster Manual* for a full description of this ability.
* From the *Book of Vile Darkness* (mature audiences only).

SPIDER SPELLS

Ettercaps regularly make use of a variety of spider-related magic. Spells like *creeping doom*, *summon swarm*, *giant insect*, and various *summon monster* spells that summon monstrous spiders are particular favorites.

Spider Hand

Transmutation
Level: Cleric 1, druid 1
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: Caster's hand
Duration: Concentration (up to 1 minute/level)

You detach your hand, which transforms into a Small monstrous spider (see the *Monster Manual*) that you control. You can see through its eyes, and it can travel up to 20 feet per level away from you. If the spider is killed or prevented from returning to you, your hand is restored when the spell ends, but you take 1d6 points of damage. If you direct the spider to return to your arm (a move-equivalent action), then let the spell end, you take no damage.

the ettercap's web. The trap is even more effective if the bait is left screaming for help and the ground is planted with sticks covered in the ettercap's poison.

CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; DC 22 Reflex save avoids; 20 ft. high (2d6, fall); crude ground spikes (Atk +5 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 each plus poison); poison (ettercap poison, DC 15 Fortitude save resists, 1d6/2d6 Dex); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 17.

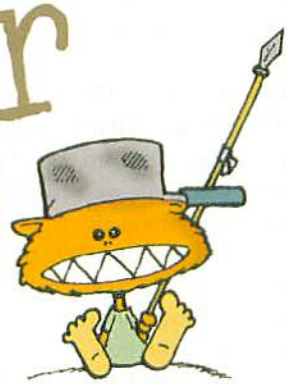
Dancing Dead Man: Ettercaps create dancing dead men by filling a humanoid husk with rocks, wet leaves, and liquid webbing. Once attached to a strong web and placed to swing into the victim's path, the device behaves as a pendulum-style giant sap that bursts upon hitting a target, covering it in webs.

CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +5 melee (4d6 nonlethal plus liquid webbing); liquid webbing (ettercap web, DC 13 Escape Artist or DC 17 Strength check to escape; 6 hp, Hardness 0, double damage from fire); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 15.

Camouflaged Tripping Strand: As a simple trap, ettercaps simply hide strong, braided strands of webbing across a path, causing creatures to trip and fall into a web hidden just a few feet ahead.

CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Atk +15 melee touch (trip plus entangle); entangle (ettercap web, DC 13 Escape Artist or DC 17 Strength check to escape; 6 hp. Hardness 0, double damage from fire); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 15.

Who's Fodder Now?



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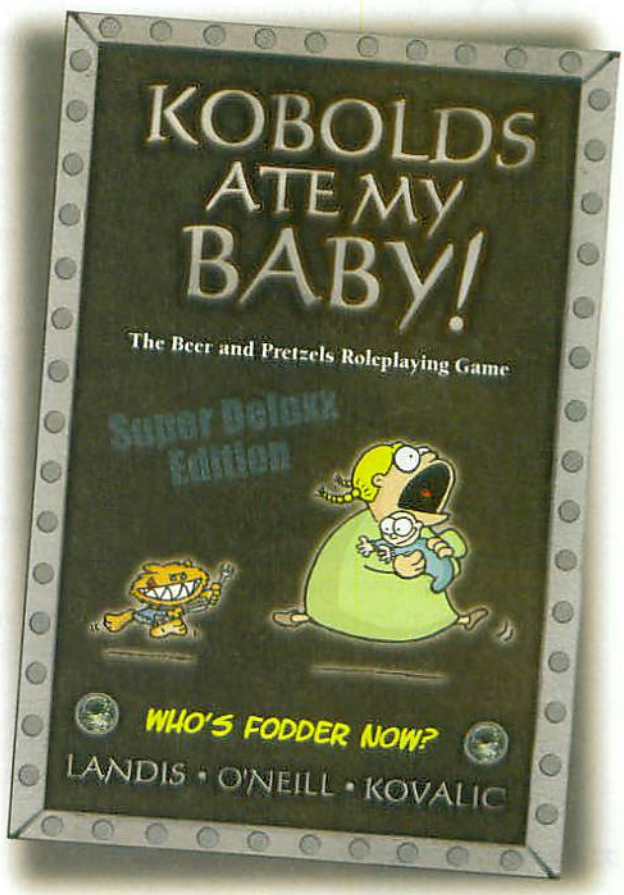


AGE OF WORMS

by the Dragon Staff • Chad Dulac with UDON and Omar Dogan

Wormfood

Surviving the Age of Worms Adventure Path

Gating in the Heavy Hitters

While the pages of *Dungeon* magazine present everything a DM needs to run the Age of Worms Adventure Path, every month *Dragon* gives the players of that—or any other campaign—tools to enhance their gaming experience.

The player characters stand upon the threshold of the Age of Worms, an era of writhing darkness and shuddering decay. Having defeated legions of wretched cultists, cities of giants, and a rainbow of chromatic dragons, the appointed hour grows near, and the final showdown against the Wormgod Kyuss and his most powerful minions is imminent.

Naturally, you'll want to call in some help. And with the *gate* spell at your disposal, you can count on some very powerful help indeed. One of the most powerful spells available in Dungeons & Dragons, *gate* allows you to open a portal to another plane of existence and call a creature or creatures to serve you. The *Player's Handbook* (page 234) outlines how to call numerous "generic" creatures, but doesn't say quite as much about *gate's* more intriguing option—summoning a single creature with Hit Dice equal to up to twice the caster's caster level. Given that you must be at least 17th level to cast a 9th-level spell, we're talking about some of the most powerful creatures in the multiverse.

This article presents six unique planar creatures that may be called via the *gate* spell, one for each of the nonevil alignments. While we don't have nearly enough space to provide whole stat blocks for these potential allies, the short personality sketches and class and level breakdowns should be enough to get you started with stating them up on your own. Because each is a unique being with its own aspirations and motivations, the spell does not allow the caster to control them as he might lesser creatures. To help, we've provided information on how to bargain for service with these creatures to ensure their loyalty, at least temporarily.

Always remember that unique creatures are free to abandon you at any time, so it's in your best interest to keep them happy, fully buffed up with powerful spells, and pointed firmly at the heart of Kyuss' repulsive machinations.

BARABOG

CN male titan barbarian 6

Hailing from the heroic domains of Ysgard, Barabog is a titan who lives life to the fullest, hoping to sample everything the world has to offer before some epic battle claims him. When not engaged in a mighty struggle, Barabog spends his time drinking and celebrating with any willing to have him. When called, the titan throws himself into the task at hand, going into a rage the moment he is injured. Barabog stands almost 30 feet tall and wears a shining mithral breastplate underneath his braided beard. The titan wields a Huge +2 *keen wounding greataxe* with brutal efficiency.

Bargain: Barabog expects payment for his services in the form of food and drink. The titan is easily bored by the mundane, however. He generally requests a large quantity of food and drink he has never had before. As he has sampled a lot of different cuisine, this request usually costs approximately 5,000 gp in exotic spices, meats, and barrels upon barrels of rare wine. Barabog understands that acquiring such fine foods takes time and is willing to wait up to a week to receive payment.

FURNACE MASTER GENDINOM

N advanced 28-HD elder fire elemental

A devoted servant of His Most Grand and Unrepentant Excellence, Ioz Imin—a bey of the Efreet Grand Sultan in the City of Brass—Gendinom hates leaving his sweltering home plane. Arrogant, dedicated to his genie master, and obsessed with burning things, the elemental has an explosive temper and often turns it upon those who call him. If he can be calmed with a compelling bargain, though, the towering pillar of fire zealously turns his rage toward any he is set against, eager to bring a piece of the Elemental Plane of Fire to the Material Plane.

Bargain: Charged with maintaining the near sunlike temperatures of his sybaritic master's sweltering smoke saunas and brazen fire pits, Gendinom has burnt countless materials and beings in an endless search for the perfect conflagration. In return for his service, the fire elemental demands something new to cast into his immortal master's great furnaces. With centuries of experience, Gendinom has burnt almost every mundane substance and a member of nearly every known race. As such, offerings should consist of either unique creations, new or magical works of art, or something else the centuries-old elemental has never encountered—a task that might prove quite a feat.

SELAUAFE

CG female mature adult celestial brass dragon

A radiant beauty among her kind, Selauafe lives in opulent splendor atop a high mesa overlooking the infinite desert of Mithardir, third layer of the Olympian Glades of Arborea. Endlessly mercurial and mischievous, but equally kind and curious, Selauafe acts the bored and spoiled princess she alleges to be. As a celestial metallic dragon, other dragons find Selauafe's persistent and tireless claim of being the granddaughter of Bahamut difficult to dispute. Indeed, she possesses the royal bearing and beatific benevolence of Bahamut's close (and confirmed) offspring.

Bargain: As befitting draconic royalty, Selauafe requires that whoever calls on her addresses her in Draconic and treat her as a princess. She especially likes it when those who request her aid refer to her as the granddaughter of Bahamut. In addition to deferential treatment, Selauafe

possesses the very draconic greed for material goods and the distinctly brass dragon love of conversation. Selauafe requires a single gift worth no less than 10,000 gp (refusing numerous smaller gifts totaling the same amount), but she is willing to reduce the minimum value of the gift by 1,000 gp for each month the summoner agrees to stay in her mesa-top palace conversing with her (this can be done after Selauafe's service ends).

SYRANUS

NG male solar ranger 5

Although he often roams the planes while on the hunt, Syranus calls the Twin Paradises of Bytopia his home. Dedicated, above all, to the eradication of undead and those who subvert nature, Syranus often goes on extended quests to root out and destroy some undead menace. Not surprisingly, the solar is greatly concerned with the impending Age of Worms, and if presented with the opportunity to act against that threat he takes it without question.

In battle, Syranus prefers to use his *+3 undead bane composite longbow* with it *slaying arrows* for as long as possible before closing in to use his *+5 speed undead bane greatsword* to finish off foes. Due to his levels in ranger, Syranus receives a +4 bonus on damage rolls against undead creatures and has the archery combat style. Syranus wears very little and his white marble skin is covered in faintly glowing runes and symbols that remind the solar of his sworn vows.

Bargain: Syranus asks for no payment if the task presented to him involves the destruction of undead creatures or their masters. The solar refuses all other tasks, instead returning to the Outer Planes to continue his eternal struggle.

WALKYRIE XVII

LN advanced 16 HD zelekhut inevitable fighter 10

A powerful hunter in the service of absolute law, Walkyrie XVII patrols the planes of Acheron, the Beastlands, the Outlands, and any other plane where fugitives might attempt to go to ground. While willing to aid other servants of law, the inevitable is constantly on the hunt and allows himself to become sidetracked by a summoner only if doing so ultimately aids his current or future quests. In battle, Walkyrie XVII makes use of a powerful *+4 axiomatic crossbow* in addition to his considerable natural attacks and spell-like abilities.

Bargain: On the hunt for numerous individuals at any one time, Walkyrie XVII ever searches for new information that might lead him to one of his current quarries or provide him further insight into the mind of a fugitive. The inevitable willingly aids any creature capable of imparting some bit of obscure arcane or planar lore. A summoner who succeeds at either a DC 35 Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (the planes) check proves knowledgeable enough to aid the planar hunter and gain his service.

Alternatively, a summoner might gain Walkyrie XVII's aid by directing him toward a new quarry, one who has greatly offended the forces of law. If the transgressor is deemed worth the zelekhut's time (determined by the DM), Walkyrie XVII aids the informative summoner and notes the lawbreaker for a future hunt (he does not begin pursuing the new target immediately).

XITOMAT

LG male couatl monk 16

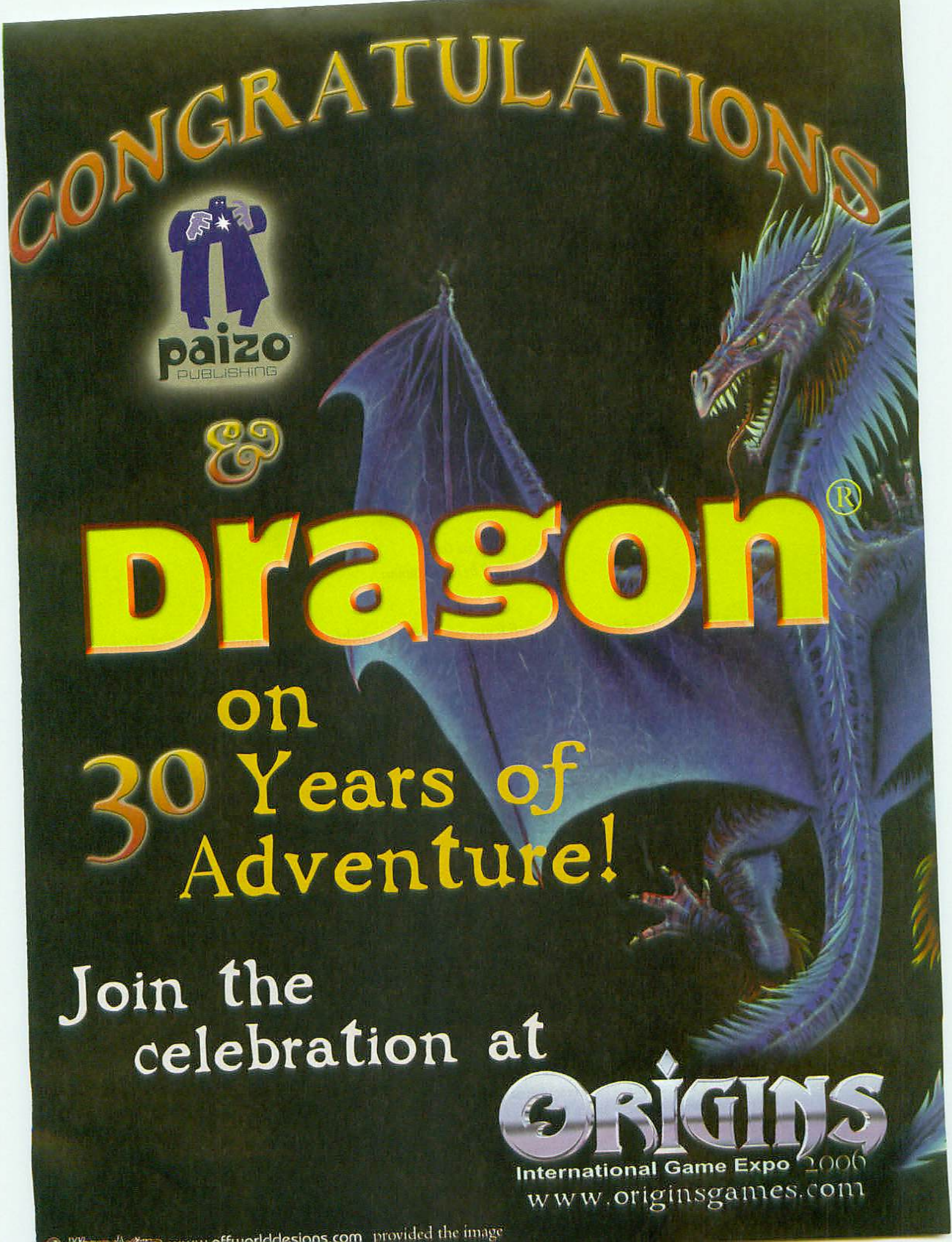
Xitomat's plumage is actually subdued compared to other couatls, as if the colors of his scales and wings washed out in water. The Washed Monk, as he is sometimes called, spends his days within a humble-looking monastery standing atop a windswept arm of the Seven Mounting Heavens of Celestia. Creatures of all varieties travel to Xitomat's monastery looking for training. Conceited and narcissistic to the furthest extremes his alignment allows, Xitomat claims that he created or was the inspiration for most of the martial arts techniques known to mortals. He occasionally spends years at a time locked away within his monastery, developing new techniques or engaging in months-long meditations.

Bargain: When called to service, Xitomat feigns indifference and pretends at anger if offered material goods. Regardless of the truth of his claims about developing numerous martial arts techniques, he has a vast knowledge of different forms and moves, and as part of his payment for rendering a service Xitomat requires the demonstration of a move, technique, or throw he does not know. This requires a character with the Improved Unarmed Strike feat to succeed on an unarmed attack roll against Armor Class 40 without the aid of any kind of magic (Xitomat casts *detect magic* just before the character attempts the attack roll). Xitomat does not mind if it takes the character several attempts to succeed. Xitomat requires a group of characters that cannot show him a new move to spend a month with him in his monastery, learning a new technique from him (this can be done after Xitomat's service ends).

FOR THE DM

While the bargaining aspect of *gate* allows spellcasters to exact specific services from the creatures they summon, such deals can swiftly derail a game. As a DM, you may want to limit or gloss over some aspects of your players' interplanar wheeling and dealing to keep the larger adventure on track.

You should also remember that PCs aren't the only characters with access to *gate*. By the end of the Age of Worms, numerous opponents might be able to call some of the most terrifying beings in all the planes to their service. Evil spellcasters looking for extraplanar allies might consider advanced, classed, or templated balors, devourers, liches, nightcrawlers, pit fiends, slaad, titans, vampires, or even chromatic dragons.



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Worm Bound
The Secrets of Kyuss

by Jesse Decker
illustrated by Kieran Yanner

"Few have not heard of the dreaded sons of Kyuss—terrible zombies that spawn their kind through sickly green worms that corrupt the living. Few know that the creator of these foul creatures, Kyuss himself, has an active cult in the Flanaess."

—Fragment of text recovered from the Ameido Jungle

Kyuss, an evil god of bones and worms, rots beyond the bounds of the mortal world, waiting for the foretold time of his dominion. Prophecies that speak of the end of things speak always of the Age of Worms, a time that might soon be at hand. Through slow years of waiting and festering, the servants of Kyuss have held themselves in check, letting the corruption of their will spread away from the eyes of the forces of good. Now, the Age of Worms draws near, decay seeps into the weft of the world itself, and the followers of Kyuss emerge from the shadows.

With the rise of the cult of Kyuss, numerous blasphemous arcane designs have recently appeared. These spells and magic items exemplify the dark genius and paranoia of Kyuss, each offering great power but also the risk of slavery to Kyuss' mad will.

WORMBOUND

The most insane of Kyuss' servants take living Kyuss worms into their bodies. Rather than devouring their hosts, though, these writhing horrors grant spellcasters a powerful connection to the Wormgod and access to his foulest magic. This rite and the increased power it provides is represented by the following feat.

WORMBOUND [GENERAL]

You have taken a vile green Kyuss worm into your own body and bound yourself to its power.

Prerequisites: Living creature, host a living Kyuss worm.

Benefits: Successfully hosting a Kyuss worm requires a special binding ritual. The ritual requires 4 hours of uninterrupted meditation, 500 gp in special materials, and a living Kyuss worm. At the end of the ceremony, you must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude saving throw or die. If you fail the saving throw, you rise as a spawn of Kyuss within 1d6+4 rounds. If you succeed at the saving throw, you can add the following spells to your class spell list:

2nd–*path of worms*
3rd—*consume the parasite, the worm within*
4th—*mindworms*
5th—*servant of the green corruption*
7th—*extrude wormswarm*

You must still learn and prepare these spells according to the normal spellcasting rules for your class.

The worm can be removed only by casting one of the following spells: *dispel*

evil, heal, remove curse, or *remove disease* in a *hallowed* area, or by casting *consume the parasite.* If the worm is removed, you cannot cast these spells and lose any of these spells that you may have prepared. You must repeat the binding ritual to regain this feat's benefits.

Special: If you die with a living Kyuss worm inside you, you rise as a spawn of Kyuss within 1d6+4 rounds. As a spawn of Kyuss, you exist only to spread the corrupting power of Kyuss and have no free will of your own (meaning that the spawn of Kyuss becomes a monster under the DM's control).

SPELLS OF KYUSS

The cult of Kyuss and the other servants of the Worm God frequently make use of a variety of blasphemous and disgusting spells. All of these spells require that the caster possess either the Wormbound Spellcaster feat or the wormspawn subtype.

CONSUME THE PARASITE

Necromancy [Evil]
Level: Kyuss 3
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 swift action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 round/level

You consume the Kyuss worm in your own body to grant yourself a temporary boost in power. When you cast this spell, you gain 3 hit points per caster level. If this hit point gain takes you above your normal maximum you gain the remaining total as temporary hit points. These temporary hit points expire when the spell's duration ends if they are not lost sooner. In addition, you gain a +4 enhancment bonus to Strength and Dexterity for the duration of the spell. This spell also increases the power of your spells while it is in effect, granting you a +2 bonus to caster level on other spells cast during the duration of the spell and increasing the DC of any spell that you cast by 2. However, casting this spell consumes the Kyuss worm that you have bound to your soul, and you do not gain the effects of the Wormbound feat until you are able to find another Kyuss worm and complete the ritual of binding once again.

Material Component: A Kyuss worm hosted within your body. Creatures with the wormspawn subtype merely require a live Kyuss worm.

EXTRUDE WORMSWARM

Conjuration (Summoning) [Evil]
Level: Kyuss 7
Components: V, S, F
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: 5 ft. (see text)
Effect: One wormswarm
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

You summon a swarm of Kyuss worms to attack your foes. These writhing, twisting green worms swarm over your body briefly and then congregate in adjacent squares of your choice. The wormswarm takes no other action on the first round that it is summoned, although if it appears in occupied

Wormswarm

A writhing mass of tiny green worms surges across the floor, each one a horror of teeth and malignant hunger.

WORMSWARM **CR 10**

Always CE Diminutive Vermin
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0

AC 20, touch 20, flat-footed 14
hp 102 (12 HD)
Immune critical hits, flanking, mind-affecting, sneak attack, weapon damage
Fort +12, **Ref** +10, **Will** +4
Weakness swarm weaknesses

Spd 30 ft., burrow 10 ft., swim 30 ft.
Melee swarm (3d6 plus poison)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.
Base Atk +9; **Grp** –8
Atk Options distraction
Special Atk create spawn

Abilities Str 1, Dex 22, Con 18, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 8
SQ obey the wormtouched, swarm traits, vermin traits

Environment any Kyuss-associated
Organization solitary, swath (2–4), or infestation (5–12)
Treasure none
Advancement none

Distraction (Su): Any living creature that begins its turn with a wormswarm in its space must make a DC 20 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 20, initial damage 1d4 Int, secondary damage 2d4 Int. The save DC is Constitution based.

Create Spawn (Su): Any living creature killed by a wormswarm rises as a zombie in 1d4 hours. A humanoid creature with 11 or more Hit Dice instead rises as a sword of Kyuss in 1d4 hours.

Obey the Wormtouched (Su): Although they are mindless, wormswarms unerringly follow simple commands given by other undead servants of Kyuss.

squares, the creatures in those spaces suffer the distraction effect typical of swarms. See the wormswarm sidebar for this terror's statistics.

Focus: A Kyuss worm hosted within your body.

Mindworms

Conjuration [Evil]
Level: Kyuss 4
Components: V, S, F
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. / 2 levels)
Target: One living creature
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will partial
Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell causes incorporeal green worms to fly through the target creature. The affected creature takes 1d6 points of Wisdom damage and loses three spell levels worth of spells. The spell levels can be in any form or combination of prepared spells or remaining spell slots (for spontaneous casters) of the target's choice. This spell-draining effect has no effect on spell-like abilities. The spells drained can be either arcane or divine spells, depending on what kind of spells the target has access to. If the target casts both arcane and divine spells, the target can choose any combination of arcane and divine spells that it currently has prepared (or spell slots that it still has available) to meet the three-level requirement. This spell has no effect on cantrips or orisons (0-level spells) and only affects spells of 1st level or higher. The target halves the Wisdom damage and negates the spell-draining effect with a successful Will saving throw.

If the target does not have the ability to cast spells or has no remaining spells or spell slots of 3rd level or lower, the spell-draining effect of the spell has no effect.

Whenever you successfully drain three spells from a target with this spell, you gain spell energy that can power your spells. Draining less than three spells grants you no benefit. You can use this spell energy in one of three ways:

- Recall one prepared spell of 3rd level or lower. The recalled spell must have been previously cast during the same day, and you must meet any other requirements for being able to cast the spell.
- Gain an additional spell slot of 3rd level or lower. Spontaneous spellcasters can use the spell energy to give themselves one additional use of a 3rd level or lower spell known.
- Spontaneously apply metamagic effects to a spell. You can use the spell energy to spontaneously apply the effects of one metamagic feat that you possess to a spell as you cast it. Applying this one metamagic feat totally consumes the spell energy.

Regardless of how the spell energy is used, it is available only one time. The energy is completely gone once used, and if not used within 1 hour it fades harmlessly away.

Focus: A Kyuss worm hosted within your body.

Path of Worms

Divination [Evil]
Level: Kyuss 2
Components: V, S, F
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 hour/level or until discharged
Saving Throw: Will negates (see below)
Spell Resistance: Yes (see below)

This spell infuses your own perceptions with a shard of Kyuss' power, granting you a sixth sense. Once during the spell's duration, you may choose to use its effect. This spell grants you a +6 insight bonus on any single attack roll, opposed ability or skill check, or saving throw. Alternately, you can apply the insight bonus to your AC against a single attack (even if flat-footed). Activating the effect is an immediate action. You must chose to use the *path of worms* bonus either before you make the roll it is to modify or, when increasing your AC, before a roll is made to attack you.

When the spell is used, living creatures within 20 feet of you are exposed to a glimpse of the writhing

madness prophesied in the Age of Worms. For the merest second, they see within their minds the desolation and ever-increasing terror of what the world will one day become. These visions are so overpowering that all who experience them must make a Will saving throw or be stunned for 1 round. This discharge effect is a mind-affecting effect, and spell resistance applies.

Focus: A Kyuss worm hosted within your body.

SERVANT OF THE GREEN CORRUPTION

Necromancy (Mind-Affecting) [Evil]
Level: Kyuss 5
Components: V, S, F
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One living creature
Duration: 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

You imbue the affected creature with a small shard of Kyuss' divine power. The affected creature gains a +4 insight bonus to attack rolls, armor class, and a +20 foot enhancement bonus to speed.

Kyuss' power never comes without a price, however, as the wormgod constantly seeks to bind mortals to his will and to bring about the long foretold Age of Worms. Because of Kyuss' corrupting influence, the affected creature becomes more susceptible to the powers of Kyuss. The affected creature suffers a -10 penalty on all saving throws against spells that require a Kyuss worm as a component and against effects generated by creatures with the wormspawn subtype.

A successful Will saving throw negates both the positive and negative effects of this spell.

Focus: A Kyuss worm hosted within your body.

THE WORM WITHIN

Necromancy [Evil]
Level: Kyuss 3
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One living creature
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

You create a Kyuss worm burrowing within the flesh of your foe. The worm makes its way through the host's body, dealing 1 point of damage per round for 1d4+1 rounds. At the end of that point, it reaches the brain. While the worm is inside a victim, any of the following spells can destroy it: *dispel evil, heal, remove curse,* and *remove disease.* A successful DC 20 Heal check extracts the worm and destroys it. Once the worm reaches the brain, it deals 1d2 points of Intelligence damage per round until either it is killed or it slays its host. A Small, Medium, or Large creature rises as a spawn of Kyuss 1d6+4 rounds later. A Tiny or smaller creature quickly putrefies, and a Huge or larger creature becomes a normal zombie of the appropriate size. This spell grants no control over undead creatures created in this manner.

Wormspawn

The children of Kyuss, wormspawn are a broad subtype of monsters dedicated to the whims of the Writhing God. Numerous creatures—most created by Kyuss himself—can be classified as wormspawn, though others might exist. Those wormspawn currently known are:

- Avolakia (*Monster Manual II*)
- Broodfiend (DUNGEON #135)
- Earthcancer centipede (DUNGEON #134)
- Eviscerator beetle (DUNGEON #130)
- Favored spawn of Kyuss (DRAGON #336)
- Kyuss knight (DUNGEON #130)
- Kyuss spawnling (DUNGEON #126)
- Mindkiller scorpion (DUNGEON #134)
- Overworm (DUNGEON #130)
- Spawn of Kyuss (*Monster Manual II*)
- Sword of Kyuss (DUNGEON #130)
- Ulgurstasta (*Fiend Folio*)
- Wormcaller (DUNGEON #130)
- Wormdrake (DUNGEON #134)
- Worm naga (DUNGEON #130)
- Worm that walks (*Epic Level Handbook*)
- Worm swarm (DUNGEON #130)

A successful Fortitude saving throw negates the effects of this spell.

Focus: A Kyuss worm hosted within your body.

VESTIGE WORMS

While Kyuss lived as a mortal, he ever craved more power, but as his power grew, so to did his need to protect what might and lore he had already gathered. To ward himself against power-hungry rivals and heroes bent on ending his tyrannical rule, the mortal Kyuss transformed the green worms that had brought him so much success into vessels for storing magical might.

Vestige worms, as these storage vessels came to be known, can store a wide variety of magical effects, but all have certain similarities. They are living creatures (Fine vermin, AC 10, 1 hp) and can be killed, but they are also magic items. There are three specific types of vestige worms: spellworms, loreworms, and vision worms. Bonding with any of these creatures is considered an evil act.

Successfully hosting a vestige worm requires nothing more than placing the worm next to unprotected flesh and allowing it to burrow in (dealing 1 hit point of damage). Once inside its host, the vestige worm attempts to exert control over its host. The host must succeed at a DC 20 Will save or fall under the sway of the worm's mental control. If the saving throw is successful, the host masters the worm and can access its power. If the worm gains control of the host, it forces the host to seek out followers of Kyuss and follow their will.

Vestige worms are almost never bought and sold, and instead are found only in long-forgotten places where Kyuss held power. The listed values of the vestige worms are included only to provide the DM with a sense of their relative power to other magic items and their effect on character wealth by level.

SPELLWORM

A *spellworm* imparts the ability to perform a single casting of a spell to its host.

Description: A *spellworm* looks like any other Tiny Kyuss worm, save for faintly glowing arcane sigils that adorn its sickening flesh. For as long as a host creature is bound to a *spellworm*, its pupils turn a dull and sickly green.

Activation: Like other Kyuss worms, a *spellworm* must be inside a host creature in order to be used. Once a host creature has successfully taken the worm into its body, casting the stored spell is a standard-action, just like using a spell-like ability.

Effect: A *spellworm* grants its host the ability to cast one spell. The host casts the spell as a full-round action. This follows the normal rules for casting the spell in question, including provoking attacks of opportunity, being subject to arcane spell failure, and any other applicable restrictions. The worm provides the power to cast the spell at the given caster level, even if the host's relevant ability score is too low to normally cast the spell, but the saving throw DC is dependant on the host's relevant ability score. Upon casting this spell the *spellworm* it is destroyed.

Aura/Caster Level: Moderate necromancy; CL varies.

Construction: Craft Wondrous Item, Wormbound Spellcaster or wormspawn subtype, ability to cast the spell stored within the worm, any metamagic feats to be applied.

Value: 50 × Spell Level × Caster Level.

Loreworm

A *loreworm* imparts knowledge of a single subject to its host.

Description: A *loreworm* looks like any other Tiny Kyuss worm, save for faintly glowing blue bands of color that ring its body at even intervals. For as long as a host creature is bound to a *loreworm*, the pupils of its eyes change and writhe through a variety of rune-like shapes.

Activation: Like other Kyuss worms, a *loreworm* must be inside a host creature in order to be used. Once a host creature has successfully taken the worm into its body, it gains the skill bonus until the worm is destroyed or removed.

Effect: A *loreworm* stores knowledge on one subject and provides a skill bonus on one Knowledge skill, as well as allowing its host to make skill checks with the affected Knowledge skill even if untrained. It comes in three degrees of power, imparting either a +2, a +5, or a +10 competence bonus on one Knowledge skill. Upon gaining this bonus the *loreworm* it is destroyed.

Aura/Caster Level: Moderate necromancy; CL 7th.

Construction: Craft Wondrous Item, Wormbound Spellcaster or wormspawn subtype, 8 ranks in a Knowledge skill.

Value: +2 worm 600 gp; +5 worm 3750 gp; +10 worm 15,000 gp.

Visionworm

A *visionworm* holds a perfect picture of one moment in time.

Description: A *visionworm* looks like any other Tiny Kyuss worm, save for two faintly glowing red ovals, vaguely reminiscent of eyes, on the creature's back. For as long as a host creature is bound to a *visionworm*, the pupils of its eyes turn a lusterless gray color.

Activation: Like other Kyuss worms, a *visionworm* must be inside a host creature in order to be used. Using a *visionworm* is a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

Effect: The host of the *visionworm* can always recall with perfect clarity the visual details of one moment in the past that the creator witnessed.

Aura/Caster Level: Moderate necromancy; CL 10th.

Construction: Craft Wondrous Item, Wormbound Spellcaster feat or wormspawn subtype, must have witnessed the depicted event first-hand.

Value: 300 gp.

Sample Spellworms

Spell	Level	CL	Value
Longstrider	1	1	50 gp
Protection from Good	1	1	50 gp
True Strike	1	1	50 gp
Divine Favor	1	9	350 gp
Invisibility	2	3	300 gp
Mirror Image	2	3	300 gp
Silence	2	3	300 gp
Displacement	3	5	750 gp
Fly	3	5	750 gp
Protection from Energy	3	5	750 gp
Charm Monster	4	7	1400 gp
Dimension Door	4	7	1400 gp
Improved Invisibility	4	7	1400 gp
Dominate Person	5	9	2250 gp
Teleport	5	9	2250 gp

In the Age of Worms

Those running the Age of Worms Adventure Path currently appearing in *Dungeon* (starting in issue #124 and culminating next month in issue #135) might wish to incorporate the spells and magic items presented in this article into that campaign. Following are some notes on which published adventures and characters therein might benefit from this magic. While the suggestions try to be vague, players of the Age of Worms campaign are advised not to read this section.

"The Champion's Belt" (*Dungeon* #128): The cleric of Kyuss met in this adventure might possess the Wormbound Spellcaster feat and a number of the lower-level Kyuss spells. The *Apostolic Scrolls* might also hold any number of this article's spells.

"The Spire of Long Shadows" (*Dungeon* #130): Numerous visions and wall carvings in this adventure could convey arcane secrets that lead to new Kyuss spells. Vestige worms might also lie among the knowledge worms in area 5, Halls of Knowledge. The Harbinger also is likely to possess a number of Kyuss spells.

"Kings of the Rift" (*Dungeon* #133): A familiar opponent might carry a number of vestige worms with him.

"Into the Wormcrawl Fissure" (*Dungeon* #134): Several NPCs in this adventure are good candidates for Kyuss spells. Numerous avolakias, an ulgurstasta, and the fissure's greatest threat might cast many of these spells. The Tabernacle of Worms is also one of the best places in the campaign to find scrolls of Kyuss spells or vestige worms.

"Dawn of a New Age" (*Dungeon* #135): The climax of the campaign. Numerous undead spellcasters could make use of these spells, while any number of vestige worms might be discovered in the complex beneath the boneyard.

by Andy Collins • illustrated by Andrew Hou

OFFICIAL ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

This month, the Sage answers questions related to a variety of psionic and magical matters. If you have questions for the Sage, send them to **sageadvice@paizo.com**.

I assume that my lawful good cleric of a lawful neutral deity must opt to turn undead and not rebuke. If he later becomes lawful neutral, can he opt to start rebuking instead of turning? What if he then becomes lawful evil? What if he is a lawful good cleric of Wee Jas who becomes lawful neutral?

You can't voluntarily change whether your character turns or rebukes undead. If your new alignment would require a change—such as a turning cleric who becomes evil, or a lawful good cleric of Wee Jas who becomes lawful neutral—the change is applied automatically.

In the description for the zombie template, damage reduction is not mentioned as a special quality they get. However, every sample zombie listed has damage reduction 5/slashing. One of them or the other is either incorrect or missing information. My question is: Do zombies get damage reduction or not?

The published errata for the *Monster Manual* lists damage reduction as a special quality gained by all zombies. For current errata for various D&D rulebooks, visit **wizards.com/dnd**.

For creatures that have damage reduction bypassed by epic weapons, does the weapon have to be a +6 or greater weapon, or can it just have enhancements that push it into the epic category (like a *+5 keen shocking burst vorpal longsword*)?

To be considered an "epic" magic weapon, the weapon's actual enhancement bonus must be +6 or greater. Special properties such as keen are treated as equivalent to enhancement bonuses only for the purpose of pricing and for the maximum power of a weapon (for non-epic gaming). A *+5 keen shocking burst vorpal longsword* is still only a *+5 weapon* for the purpose of bypassing damage reduction, and thus wouldn't overcome DR 10/epic.

Some of the wu jen spells in *Complete Arcane*, such as *commune with lesser spirit* and *spirit binding*, refer to "spirit creatures." What are spirit creatures?

The simplest answer is that a spirit creature is a creature with the spirit subtype. The spirit subtype is a creature subtype introduced in *Oriental Adventures* (the original source of the wu jen class).

The spirit shaman class in *Complete Divine* expanded the definition of spirit creatures to also include incorporeal undead, fey, elementals, and a few other specific creatures (such as the spirit folk and telthor from page 74 of *Unapproachable East*). If you have access to that book, use that definition.

Does the powerful build racial trait allow a character to take advantage of feats for size Large or larger creatures, such as Awesome Blow? Would a half-dragon goliath qualify as Large for determining whether it has wings?

No and no. The powerful build racial trait (found in the goliath entry in *Races of Stone* and the half-giant entry in *Expanded Psionics Handbook*) spells out exactly when the character is treated as one size larger than normal:

1) Whenever subjected to a size modifier or special size modifier for an opposed check. This includes grapple checks, bull rush attempts, and trip attempts.
2) When determining whether a creature's special attacks based on size can affect him. This includes improved grab and swallow whole.
3) When determining what size of weapons the character can use.

That's it. The character isn't treated as one size larger when determining space, reach, Hide check penalty, or for the purpose of qualifying for anything that requires size.

Some feats, prestige classes, or other game elements might specifically allow a Medium character with powerful build to qualify as if he were Large. Such examples are specific and intentional exceptions to the normal rule.

Could a character use *psychic reformation* (*Expanded Psionics Handbook*, page 127) to change a character class he had gained at an earlier level?

No. *Psychic reformation* clearly states which character-building decisions can be changed: skill points, feats, and acquired powers. No other options are available.

Does Speed of Thought (*Expanded Psionics Handbook*, page 51) increase all my speeds, or just my land speed?

The insight bonus granted by this feat applies to all modes of movement.

If you augment a power, is its effective power level increased? Say I manifest *mind thrust* (*Expanded Psionics Handbook*, page 120) at an opponent protected by a *globe of invulnerability*. Is it still a 1st-level power no matter how many power points I spend?

An augmented power's level remains the same unless the augmentation listing specifically states otherwise. *Mind thrust* (a 1st-level power) can't ever pierce a *globe of invulnerability* (which protects against spells and powers of 4th level or less), regardless of how many power points you spend to augment *mind thrust*.

According to the rules, creating a magic item takes one day per 1,000 gp in its base cost, with a minimum of one day. The random scroll generation charts in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* state that a scroll could have up to six spells on it. Does this mean that when I create a scroll I can place six spells on it? Does it count as one scroll or six for purposes of item creation (i.e., should it take one day or six)?

A scroll with multiple spells counts as a single item for the purpose of determining the time to create it. A divine scroll with six castings of *cure light wounds* (market price 150 gp) would take one day to scribe; a divine scroll with six castings of *heal* (market price 9,900 gp) would take 10 days to scribe.

You'd need to expend (and prepare, if that's required by your class) the spell once for each time it appears on the scroll. The act of scribing *cure light wounds* onto a scroll the first time expends *cure light wounds*, which means you'd need to have another one prepared to scribe it again.

Do grafts (such as those from *Fiend Folio*) count as possessions for the purpose of taking a Vow of Poverty? If so, what happens to a creature with grafts who wants to take the feat? Should he cut off his arm or leg in order to take the feat?

The Sage recommends that grafts be considered "possessions" for the purpose of adjudicating the Vow of Poverty (to avoid abusing the spirit of the vow). Some grafts specifically describe how they may be removed (such as the aboleth grafts on page 208). In other cases, physical removal of the graft—which might well require amputation or the like—is almost certainly necessary.

For a variety of reasons, the game rules don't go into detail about the effects of such "surgery." Unless the DM is comfortable creating a set of house rules to handle such situations, the Sage recommends that the DM not worry about the grisly details, instead assuming that the PC survives the procedure without any long-term effects other than the obvious (a character without eyes is blind, for example, while a character missing a hand can't wield a two-handed weapon). Of course, a *regenerate* spell solves even these problems.

If I use *polymorph* to turn a target into a 1-HD humanoid (such as an elf or an orc), what class (and level) is it and how are its feats and skill points arranged?

Normally, a target retains its class and levels (i.e., Hit Dice) when *polymorphed*. An ogre *polymorphed* into an orc still has 4 HD and doesn't gain any class levels (although he retains any he had). This is true in all cases except when the new form is an object (which obviously can't have HD or class levels).

Now, if the target of the spell has no class levels (or HD), such as an object affected by *polymorph any object*, the Sage recommends that the new form be treated as a 1st-level commoner, with feats and skills chosen by the DM.

Polymorph grants the extraordinary special attacks of the creature that you become. What happens when you swallow whole an opponent who does not then escape your belly before the spell expires?

Alter self states that "any new items you wore in the assumed form and can't wear in your normal form fall off and land at your feet" which sounds like a pretty close approximation of what's happening with swallow whole. Since your normal form (assumedly) isn't capable of swallowing creatures whole, any swallowed creature would appear adjacent to your space and prone.

Healing spells and spell-like effects don't work in the Mournland (*Eberron Campaign Setting*, page 188). What about magic items that create such effects, such as a *potion of cure light wounds*? What about the paladin's lay on hands or the monk's wholeness of body? What about psionic powers that heal damage?

No magic item effect that duplicates a spell from the healing subschool functions within the Mournland. A *wand of cure light wounds*, a scroll of *cure serious wounds*, and a *potion of cure moderate wounds* are all equally useless inside that land's borders.

Extraordinary and supernatural abilities that heal hit point damage function normally, making the paladin an extremely valuable member of a Mournland-bound adventuring party.

Spells that heal damage but which aren't from the healing subschool (such as *goodberry*) work normally. Since psionic powers don't have the healing subschool (and in fact don't have subschools at all), they would also function normally.

Furthermore, while you are fully within an extradimensional space (such as that created by *rope trick* or *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion*) you can ignore this restriction entirely.

Would a spell used to duplicate a healing spell (such as *limited wish* used to duplicate *cure serious wounds*) function in the Mournland?

No. Even though the original spell might not be of the healing subschool, it perfectly duplicates the chosen spell in all aspects (except for the save DC). A *limited wish* used to duplicate *cure serious wounds* would be treated as a conjuration (healing) spell and thus would fail to function if cast in the Mournland.

Does fast healing function within the Mournland?

No. The *Monster Manual* describes fast healing as "just like natural healing" (page 309), which indicates that it does not function in the Mournland.

Can I heal nonlethal damage while in the Mournland?

Yes, unless the healing results from a spell or spell-like effect from the healing subschool. Healing nonlethal damage isn't considered "natural healing" since it isn't described under the natural healing header in the *Player's Handbook* (page 146).

Does *regeneration* function within the Mournland?

Yes, unless it results from a spell or spell-like effect from the healing subschool.

Can the *psionic identify* power (*Expanded Psionics Handbook*, page 112) be used to identify magic items? Does the *identify* spell identify psionic items?

Assuming you use the psionics-magic transparency rule detailed on page 55 in the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*, yes and yes.

Dragon

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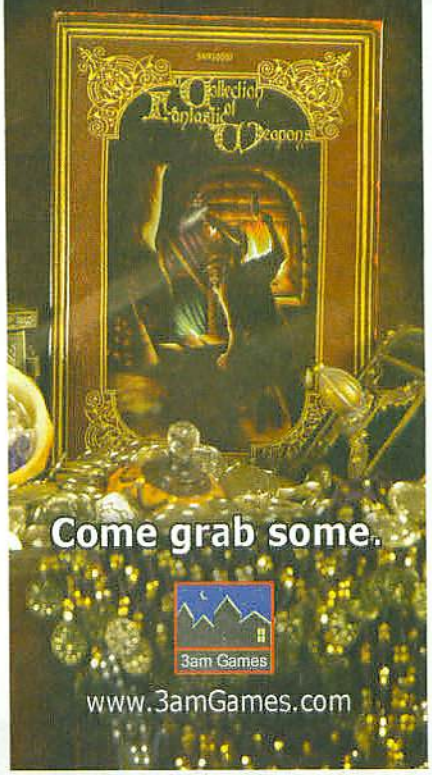

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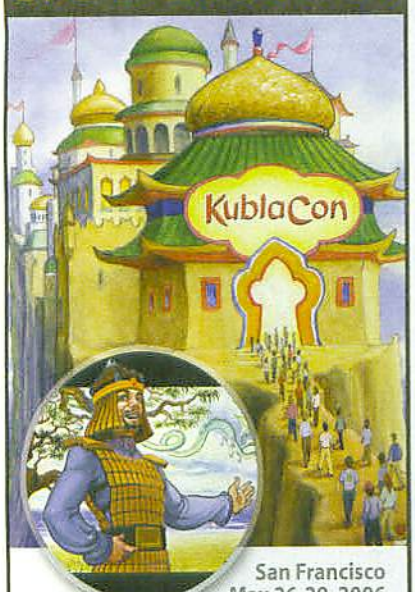

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by Tim Hitchcock • illustrated by Eric Deschamps and Drew Pocza

URBAN MARKERS

Urban adventurers who focus on subterfuge and stealth long ago created a system of markings that efficiently and surreptitiously provide invaluable information. Most of these markers are pictographs built off of commonly accepted shapes.

Urban markers tend to be temporary and are largely used by bards, rogues, assassins, and ninjas for the purpose of relaying messages to other guild members. These markers concentrate on obstacles, light conditions, the location of guards, and similar types of knowledge that make infiltration easier and that provide crucial aid to colleagues. The markers are simple and easily scratched into dirt and sand, or smudged onto surfaces with chalk, charcoal, blood, or paint: anything easily destroyed or erased by the message's reader.

Urban markers come in a variety of different groupings. Most groups have a common shape upon which all other markers are based. The most frequently used markers appear here.

Obstacles

Secret passages, compartments, locks, and other such obstacles have a variety of markers. Similar markers represent other important information such as the conditions of various surfaces or necessary skills to bypass impediments ahead.

Ladder or Climb | Weak or Unstable | Slippery or Oil or Water | Hidden Key or Latch | Secret or Locked | Dogs or Animals | Window or Hatch | Secret Door | Rope Bridge or Balance

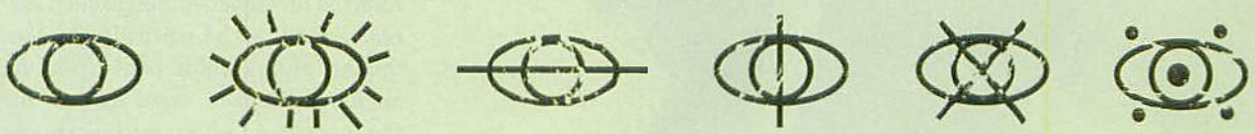
Guards

Stick forms of weapons represent different types of guards or snipers. The weapon is usually drawn pointed to the location of the guard.

Armed Guard | Two Guards | Sleeping Guard | Dead Guard | Sniper | Unarmed Guard | Light Infantry | Heavy Infantry | Mounted Guard

Light

The basic shape for light conditions is an eyelike oval inset with a smaller circle.



Light Source | Bright Light | Low Light | Darkness | Magical Darkness | Magical Light

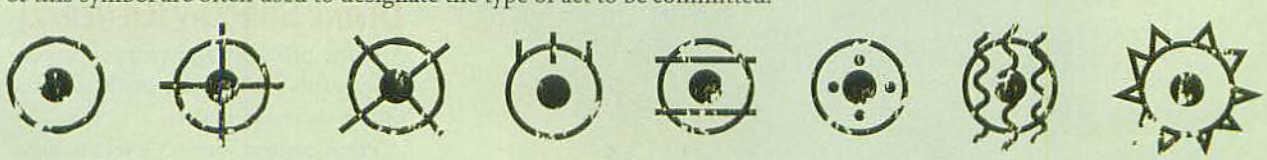
Trap

The basic shape for a trap is an X.

Trap | Gas Trap | Pit Trap | Ceiling Trap | Magic Trap | Mechanical Trap | Trapped Door or Portal | Alarm

Target

The basic symbol for the subject of an assassination, robbery, or similar mark is a targetlike circle with a dot in it. Variations of this symbol are often used to designate the type of act to be committed.



Target | Resident Marked | Relative of Mark | Official or Aristocrat | Perform Sabotage | Spellcaster | Drown Mark | Burn Down

by Jeremy Hogg • illustrated by Eric Deschamps

MAGIC IN THE BLOOD

The soul of a sorcerer is wrought with magic. An intuitive discipline strongly reliant on inborn talent, sorcery draws its power from the character of the individual who wields it. No two sorcerers utilize their power in the same way. Some sorcerers with related heritages, however, demonstrate similarities in their magical practices. These spellcasters—usually delineated by race—sometimes have particular twists to their magical legacies that link them with a particular deity.

Many races, both monstrous and civilized, have patron deities strongly associated with them. For some sorcerers, divine influences manifest in their magical abilities, granting them access to spells and powers typically reserved for clerics. Although such sorcerers need not be particularly pious, they are always within one step of the alignment of their racial deities. For those sorcerers who meet this simple requirement, the opportunity exists for them to focus their minds and souls on the divine. Yet even when mastered, the unusual nature of their magic taxes their bodies.

Some races do not have particular racial deities to worship. Nonetheless, divine gifts appear within a rare few members of these races. Only a handful of deities make the effort to offer such gifts, and in those cases the sorcerers must exactly match the alignment of their patron deities.

The dedication needed to produce such a gift is shown by taking the feat Divine Sorcery.

DIVINE SORCERY [GENERAL]

A deity, probably the patron of your race, grants you power usually reserved for his divine followers.

Prerequisites: Sorcerer level 1st, alignment within one step of patron deity.

Benefit: You gain access to a cleric domain, giving you the domain's granted power. Each day, you can add one spell from the domain's spell list to your sorcerer spell list. You cast the spells made accessible by this feat as arcane spells.

You do not have to choose a domain you already possess from levels of cleric (if any). If you don't have levels in cleric but later gain them, you do not need to choose the domain gained from this feat as one of your two cleric domains.

Special: You may only gain this feat at your first sorcerer level.

Deities

The following deities represent a sample of racial or group-related deities who offer such powers to sorcerers. Each deity lists the races to which he grants his powers and offers different domains to sorcerers of varying alignments.

Annam

(giant, half-giant)

Neutral: Knowledge, Magic, Plant, Sun
Chaotic Neutral: Magic
Lawful Neutral: Plant
Neutral Evil: Knowledge
Neutral Good: Sun

Bahamut

(half-dragon)

Lawful Good: Air, Cold*, Good, Luck, Protection
Lawful Neutral: Protection
Neutral Good: Good

Corellon Lorethian

(elf, half-elf)

Chaotic Good: Chaos, Good, Protection, War
Chaotic Neutral: Chaos
Neutral Good: Good

Garl Glittergold

(gnome)

Neutral Good: Good, Protection, Trickery
Chaotic Good: Trickery
Lawful Good: Good
Neutral: Protection

Gruumsh

(half-orc, orc)

Chaotic Evil: Chaos, Evil, Strength, War
Chaotic Neutral: Chaos
Neutral Evil: Evil

Heironeous

(aasimaar, human)

Lawful Good: Good, Law, War
Lawful Neutral: Law
Neutral Good: Good

Hextor

(tiefling, human)

Lawful Evil: Evil, Law, War
Lawful Neutral: Law
Neutral Evil: Evil

Iallanis

(giant, half-giant)

Neutral Good: Good, Healing, Strength, Sun
Lawful Good: Good
Neutral: Strength

Kurtulmak

(kobold)

Lawful Evil: Evil, Trickery, Earth
Lawful Neutral: Earth
Neutral Evil: Evil

Laogzed

(troglodyte)

Chaotic Evil: Chaos, Death, War
Chaotic Neutral: Chaos
Neutral Evil: Death

Lolth

(drow)

Chaotic Evil: Chaos, Destruction, Evil, Trickery
Chaotic Neutral: Chaos
Neutral Evil: Evil

Maglubiyet

(goblin, hobgoblin)

Chaotic Evil: Chaos, Evil, Trickery
Chaotic Neutral: Chaos
Neutral Evil: Evil

Moradin

(dwarf)

Lawful Good: Earth, Good, Law, Protection
Lawful Neutral: Law
Neutral Good: Good

Panzuriel

(merrow, underwater monsters)

Neutral Evil: Destruction, Evil, War, Water
Chaotic Evil: Evil
Lawful Evil: War
Neutral: Water

Pelor

(half-elf, half-orc, human)

Neutral Good: Glory*, Good, Healing, Strength, Sun
Chaotic Good: Good
Lawful Good: Healing
Neutral: Sun

Semuanya

(lizardfolk)

Neutral: Animal, Plant, Water
Chaotic Neutral: Animal
Lawful Neutral: Plant
Neutral Evil: Water
Neutral Good: Water

Tiamat

(half-dragon)

Lawful Evil: Destruction, Evil, Law, Trickery
Lawful Neutral: Law
Neutral Evil: Evil

Wee Jas

(human)

Lawful Neutral: Death, Law, Magic
Lawful Evil: Law
Lawful Good: Law
Neutral: Magic

Vaprak

(half-ogre, ogre, troll)

Chaotic Evil: Chaos, Destruction, Evil, Strength
Chaotic Neutral: Chaos
Neutral Evil: Evil

Yondalla

(halfling)

Lawful Good: Good, Law, Protection
Lawful Neutral: Law
Neutral Good: Good

* New domain appearing in *Complete Divine* and *Spell Compendium*.

by Tim Hitchcock • illustrated by Eric Deschamps

Pious Extension

As divine characters gain levels and become closer to their deities, they gain an array of class features by which they define themselves. While most define their abilities by their spells or philosophies, others look for new ways of expressing their individuality, manipulating their class features to produce entirely new effects. Divine and wild feats already do this for clerics and druids, respectively, but the following feats offer examples of similar feat types for other classes that rely on divine power.

A divine feat requires a character to be able to turn or rebuke undead. See *Complete Divine* for more information on divine and wild feats.

Deflect Energy [General]

You can deflect energy attacks back at their originators.

Prerequisite: Energy resistance class ability.

Benefit: When targeted by a spell, spell-like ability, or supernatural ability of an energy type to which you are resistant, as an immediate action you can voluntarily forfeit your save against it to deflect some of the energy back at the attacking creature. You can deflect a maximum number of hit points worth of energy damage equal to your energy resistance + your divine caster level + your Charisma modifier. If the damage dealt to you exceeds what you can reflect, you take the remainder of the damage. Area effect spells are not affected by this ability.

Normal: A favored soul has energy resistance 10 of a chosen energy type.

Elemental Strike [General]

Sensing a nearby element grants you insight into how to strike it.

Prerequisite: *Sense elements* spell-like ability.

Benefit: Choose a creature you have sensed with your *sense elements* ability. You may, as a standard action, spend an additional use of *sense elements* to gain a +20 insight bonus on your next attack against the chosen creature. The attack must be made within a number of rounds equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum 1 round).

Normal: A shugenja can *sense elements* in a manner similar to the *detect magic* spell.

Energy Strike [General]

You can channel your energy resistance into your weapon, imbuing it with the ability to make ranged energy attacks.

Prerequisite: Energy resistance class ability.

Benefit: Each day you gain a pool of stored energy of one of the types of energy you have resistance against. The pool of stored energy equals 1d6 per two divine caster levels. As a standard action, you may unleash this energy in a 30-foot ray as a ranged touch attack that deals any number of dice of damage from 1d6 up to the number of dice remaining in your stored energy pool. You can use this ability at will as long as you have stored energy in your pool, but each ray must deal at least 1d6 points of damage.

Normal: A favored soul has energy resistance 10 of a chosen energy type.

Extended Spirit Form [General]

You can channel your chastise spirit ability to increase the duration of your spirit form.

Prerequisites: Chastise spirits class ability, spirit form class ability.

Benefit: You can spend a use of your chastise spirit ability to remain in spirit form for a number of additional minutes equal to 1 + your Charisma modifier (minimum 1 additional minute).

Normal: A spirit shaman's spirit form allows her to become incorporeal for 1 minute.

Extra Divine Power [General]

You can use one of your divine granted abilities more often.

Prerequisite: A divinely granted class ability with a set number of uses per day.

Benefit: Choose a class ability you have from a class that grants divine spells and has a set number of uses per day, such as a shugenja's *sense elements* or a spirit shaman's spirit form. You may not select an ability granted by a domain. You may use the chosen ability two more times per day.

Special: You may gain this feat more than once. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a different class ability.

Imbue Weapon [Divine]

Your channeled energy lets you strike a particular foe with greater power.

Prerequisites: Extra Turning, the ability to turn or rebuke undead.

Benefit: As a standard action, you may imbue your weapon with divine wrath and designate a target opponent. Whenever you attack the designated opponent with the imbued weapon, you gain a bonus on your attack and damage rolls equal to +1 per four cleric levels you possess (minimum +1). The weapon remains imbued for a number of rounds equal to the bonus you grant it.

Nature's Fists [Wild]

You can encase your hands in elemental power.

Prerequisite: Wild shape (elemental) class ability.

Benefit: Choose an element (air, earth, fire, or water). You can spend one use of your wild shape to encase your limbs in the chosen element. This effect lasts for 1 minute. You may only encase your limbs in one element at a time. While your limbs are encased, you gain a slam attack that deals 1d4 points of damage (1d3 for Small) plus additional effects based on the chosen element. Your limbs count as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction and for eliminating the 50% miss chance of incorporeal creatures. While encased in this way, you cannot use your hands for anything else, including holding objects, casting spells, or climbing. These bonuses also add to your unarmed attacks as well as all your natural attacks.

Air: +1d4 points of sonic damage and target must make Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 druid level + Charisma modifier) or be deafened for 1d4 rounds.

Earth: +1d4 points of acid damage and attack ignores hardness.

Fire: +1d4 points of fire damage and flammable objects struck have a chance of catching fire (see page 303 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

Water: +1d4 points of cold damage and target must make Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 druid level + Charisma modifier) or be fatigued for 1d4 minutes.

Photosynthesize [Wild]

Like a plant, you can create your own food from sunlight.

Prerequisite: Wild shape (plant) class ability.

Benefit: You can spend one use of your wild shape to make your flesh photosynthesize sunlight for 24 hours. For every 4 hours you spend in natural sunlight, your body photosynthesizes enough food to sustain itself for one meal. In addition, while photosynthesizing, you gain a +10 inherent bonus on Fortitude saves made to avoid the dangers of thirst. While using this ability, you are immune to suffocation.

Spirit Spell [General]

You can channel your ability to chastise spirits to increase the power of the next spell you cast.

Prerequisite: Chastise spirits class ability.

Benefit: As a standard action, you can spend four uses of your chastise spirits ability to place an aura on yourself that automatically maximizes every spell you cast in the following round, with no adjustment to spell level.

Normal: A spirit shaman can chastise spirits a number of times per day equal to 3 + her Charisma modifier.

Turn Elemental [General]

You can use your sense elements ability to turn elementals.

Prerequisite: Elemental focus class ability.

Benefit: You can turn or rebuke elementals. By expending two uses of your *sense elements* ability, you can turn or destroy a creature of the elemental type opposite your focus element, or you can rebuke, command, or bolster a creature of your focus element. Fire and water are opposites, as are earth and air. You turn or rebuke elementals as a cleric of your shugenja level turns or rebukes undead.

Normal: A shugenja gains focus with spells of one element through his elemental focus ability.

by C. Wesley Clough. • illustrated by Eric Deschamps

THE TIDE OF BATTLE

Rarely is one afforded the luxury of a duel upon the field of battle. More often, it is a hectic melee where teamwork can carry the day. The greatest warriors know to prepare for the inevitability of facing multiple foes at once. The best even go so far as to learn special combat techniques that aid them in the muddled morass of battle.

These techniques, quantified as feats, represent the ability to fight multiple foes simultaneously and to work well with others in combat. Although fighters and other warriors gain the most use from these feats, characters of other classes can also make use of them. While any class can use most of the feats presented here, one requires a specific class feature available to the swashbuckler from *Complete Warrior* (see that book for further information about the class).

Aid Giver [General]

You can aid all of your allies to a much greater effect.

Prerequisites: Combat Expertise, Dodge, Power Attack.

Benefit: As a full-round action, you can use the aid another action to aid every ally adjacent to you. Your allies all gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls or a +2 bonus to Armor Class, depending on the type of aid you give.

Normal: As a standard action you can aid one ally.

Special: A fighter may select Aid Giver as one of his fighter bonus feats (see page 38 of the *Player's Handbook*).

Battle Hardened [General]

You can fight multiple opponents and cause them to get into each other's way.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +4.

Benefit: When adjacent to two or more opponents who threaten you, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to your Armor Class.

Special: A fighter may select Battle Hardened as one of his fighter bonus feats.

Dedicated Nuisance [General]

Through a combination of taunts, weapon displays, and feints you can distract your opponents in combat.

Prerequisite: Int 13, Combat Expertise, base attack bonus +4.

Benefit: You must succeed with a melee touch attack to use this feat. Until just before your next turn, all creatures adjacent to the target other than yourself are considered to be flanking the target. This is an extraordinary mind-affecting effect.

Special: You may not target a creature immune to mind-affecting effects or who cannot be flanked.

A fighter may select Dedicated Nuisance as one of his fighter bonus feats.

Improved Whirlwind Attack [General]

You can strike at nearby opponents in a blindingly fast spinning assault and follow it up with extra attacks.

Prerequisites: Dex 13, Int 13, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack, base attack bonus +4.

Benefit: As part of a whirlwind attack full-attack action, you can make all of your additional attacks based on your base attack bonus in addition to your normal attacks granted by the feat. For example, a 12th-level fighter with Improved Whirlwind Attack can make all his normal Whirlwind Attacks (each at +12 plus Strength and other modifiers) and then make the two additional attacks he gains from having a high base attack bonus (at +7 and +2 plus Strength and other modifiers). He does not get to make these additional attacks against every opponent; he only gets the two attacks at the end of his whirlwind.

Special: A fighter may select Improved Whirlwind Attack as one of his fighter bonus feats.

Quick Cleave [General]

You can bring down foes so efficiently that those you turn your attention to next cannot react effectively.

Prerequisites: Str 15, Dex 13, Cleave, Power Attack.

Benefit: You gain a +2 circumstance bonus on the attack roll of the additional attacks you make because of Cleave and Great Cleave.

Special: A fighter may select Quick Cleave as one of his fighter bonus feats.

Ricochet [General]

You can bounce your weapon off one opponent to strike at another with the same throw.

Prerequisites: Dex 19, Blind-Fight, Improved Precise Shot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, base attack bonus +15.

Benefit: Once per round, when you successfully hit an opponent with a thrown weapon that deals bludgeoning damage, you may make an automatic second attack roll against a creature adjacent to that opponent. The second attack takes a –5 penalty. The first creature hit takes damage normally (including Strength modifier, sneak attack damage, and so on), while the second opponent takes 1/2 damage from the weapon + 1/2 your Strength modifier. Only one additional creature can be struck as a result of using this feat. You cannot sneak attack the second creature struck.

Special: A fighter may select Ricochet as one of his fighter bonus feats.

Superior Flanking [General]

You are skilled at taking advantage of a surrounded opponent.

Prerequisite: Improved flanking class ability (see page 12 of *Complete Warrior*).

Benefit: You gain a +6 bonus on attack rolls against opponents you flank. All allies who flank with you gain a +3 bonus on attack rolls against the opponents they flank.

Normal: A character with improved flanking gains a +4 bonus on attack rolls against opponents he flanks.

Special: The attack roll bonuses provided by this feat do not stack with the attack roll bonuses provided by flanking and improved flanking.

Sweeping Trip [General]

You can trip opponents in such a way that they fall into adjacent creatures.

Prerequisite: Improved Trip.

Benefit: If you successfully trip an opponent, you may forgo the immediate attack granted by Improved Trip and instead immediately make a free trip attempt against a creature adjacent to both you and the tripped opponent. This free trip attempt doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity, and if it fails, the targeted creature can react to trip you in turn. You can only attempt to trip one additional creature per round with this feat.

Special: A fighter may select Sweeping Trip as one of his fighter bonus feats.

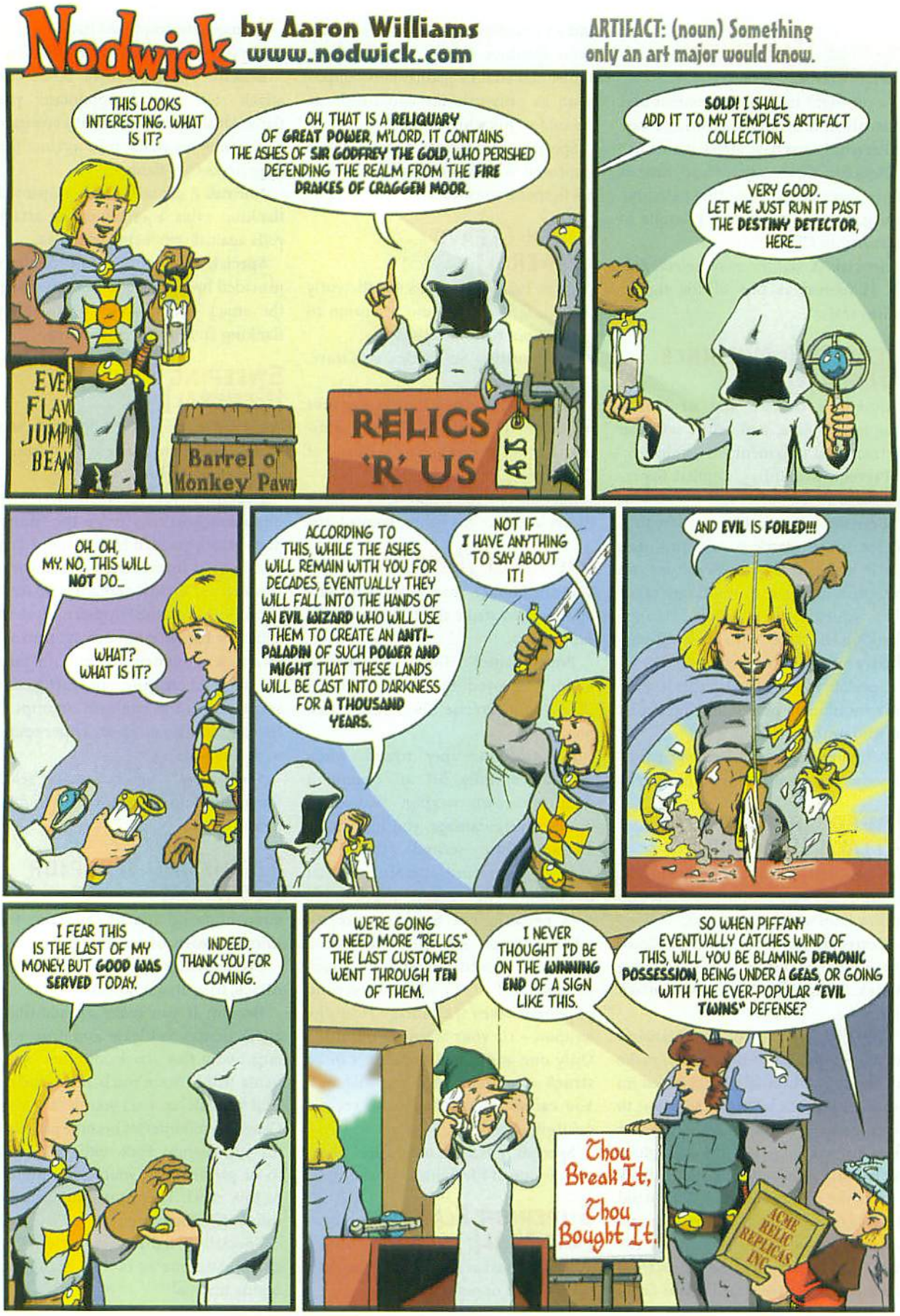
Terrifying Warrior [General]

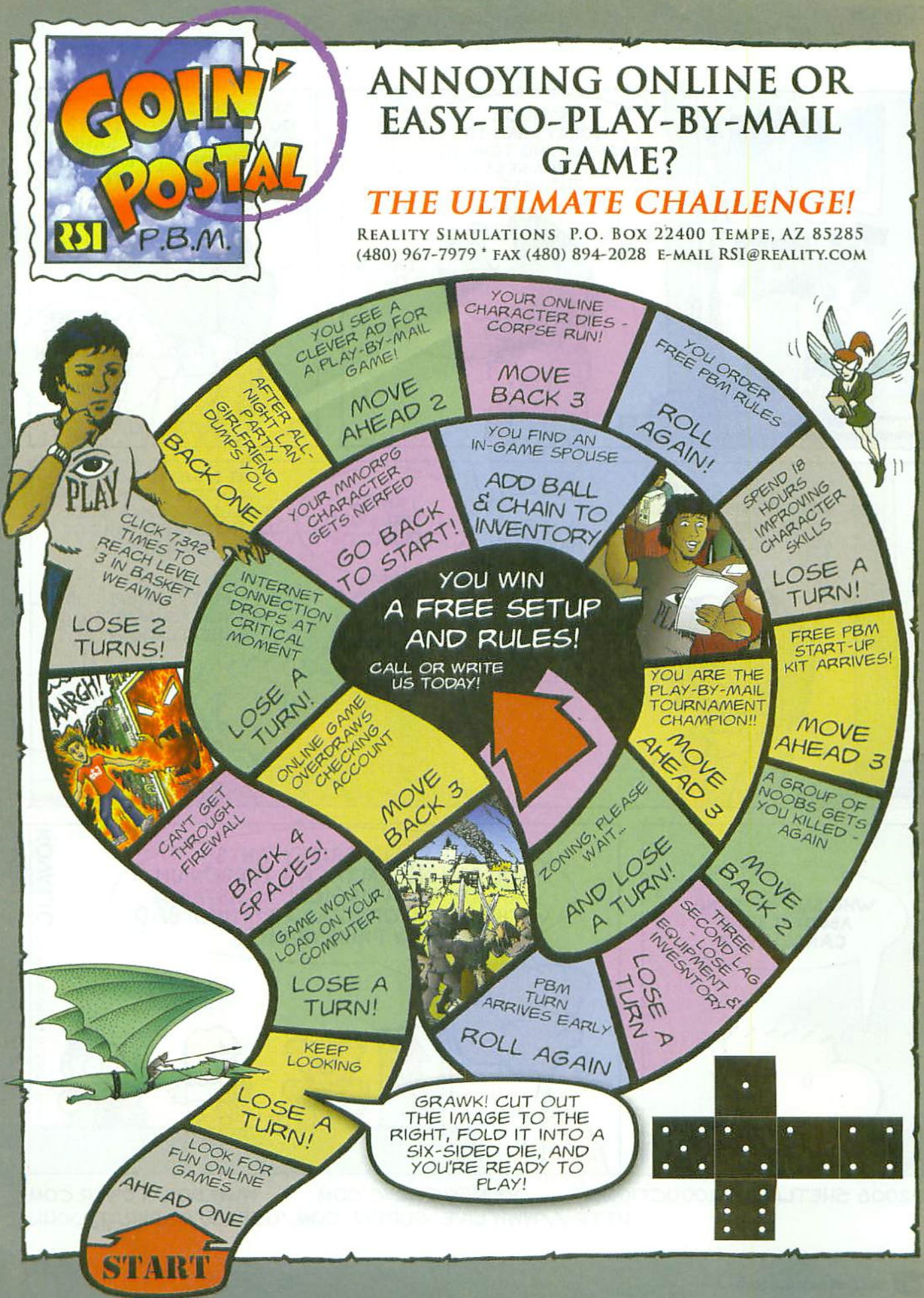
Your follow-up attacks can strike fear into the hearts of opponents.

Prerequisites: Str 13, Cleave, Power Attack, base attack bonus +3.

Benefit: If you make an additional attack thanks to Cleave and drop your target with that attack, all other opponents within your reach must make a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 your level + your Charisma modifier) or become panicked for 1d4 rounds. Foes with HD equal to or greater than yours are immune to this effect. This is an extraordinary mind-affecting fear effect.

Special: A fighter may select Terrifying Warrior as one of his fighter bonus feats.


Nodwick
by Aaron Williams
www.nodwick.com
ARTIFACT: (noun) Something only an art major would know.
THIS LOOKS INTERESTING. WHAT IS IT?
OH, THAT IS A RELIQUARY OF GREAT POWER, M'LORD. IT CONTAINS THE ASHES OF SIR GODFREY THE GOLD, WHO PERISHED DEFENDING THE REALM FROM THE FIRE DRAKES OF CRAGGEN MOOR.
RELICS 'R' US
Barrel o' Monkey Paw
SOLD! I SHALL ADD IT TO MY TEMPLE'S ARTIFACT COLLECTION.
VERY GOOD. LET ME JUST RUN IT PAST THE DESTINY DETECTOR, HERE...
OH. OH, MY. NO, THIS WILL NOT DO...
WHAT? WHAT IS IT?
ACCORDING TO THIS, WHILE THE ASHES WILL REMAIN WITH YOU FOR DECADES, EVENTUALLY THEY WILL FALL INTO THE HANDS OF AN EVIL WIZARD WHO WILL USE THEM TO CREATE AN ANTI-PALADIN OF SUCH POWER AND MIGHT THAT THESE LANDS WILL BE CAST INTO DARKNESS FOR A THOUSAND YEARS.
NOT IF I HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT IT!
AND EVIL IS FOILED!!!
I FEAR THIS IS THE LAST OF MY MONEY. BUT GOOD WAS SERVED TODAY.
INDEED. THANK YOU FOR COMING.
WE'RE GOING TO NEED MORE "RELICS." THE LAST CUSTOMER WENT THROUGH TEN OF THEM.
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE ON THE WINNING END OF A SIGN LIKE THIS.
SO WHEN PIFFANY EVENTUALLY CATCHES WIND OF THIS, WILL YOU BE BLAMING DEMONIC POSSESSION, BEING UNDER A GEAS, OR GOING WITH THE EVER-POPULAR "EVIL TWINS" DEFENSE?
Thou Break It, Thou Bought It.
ACME RELIC REPLICAS INC.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AHEAD ONE
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KEEP LOOKING
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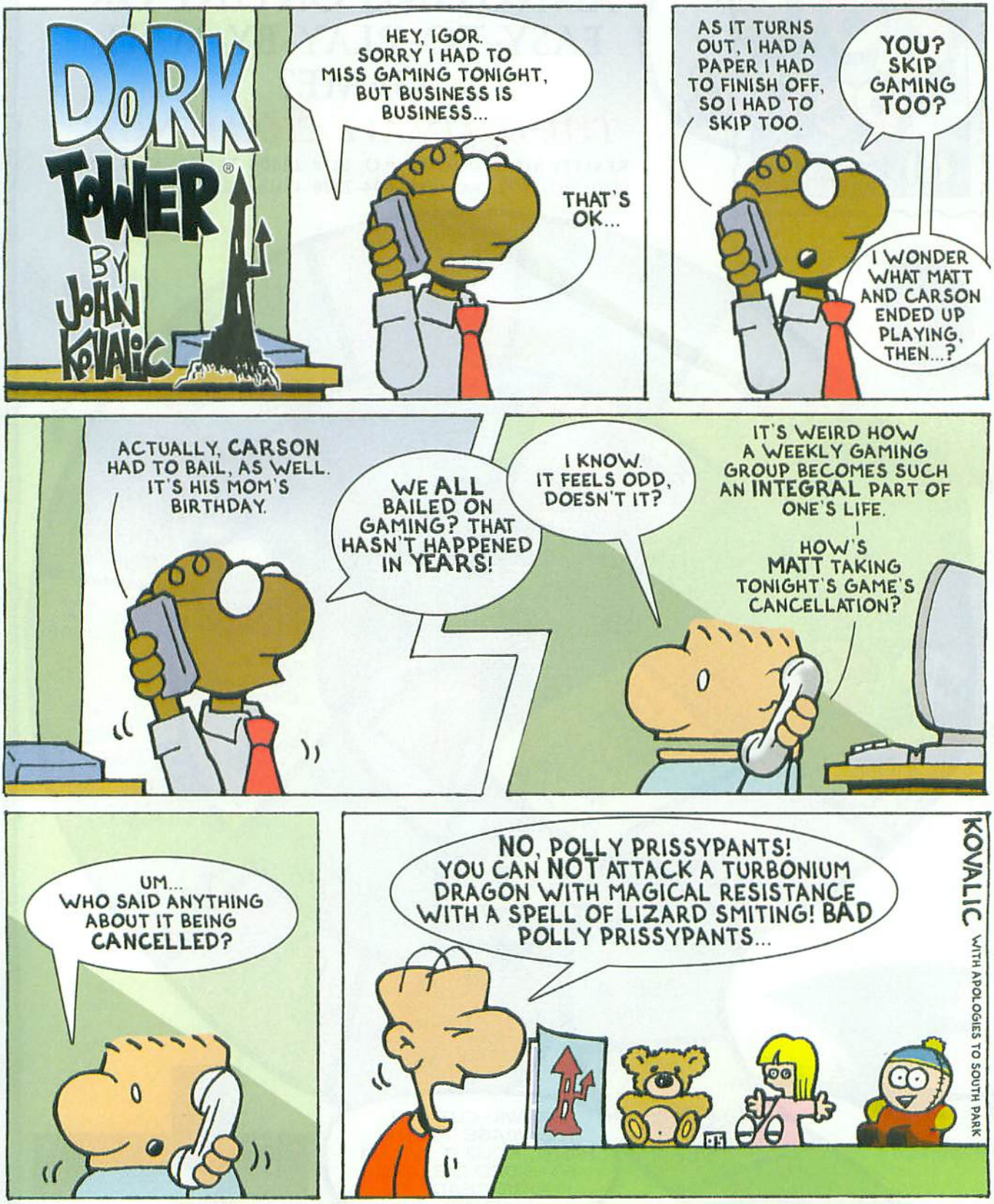
LOSE A TURN!
CAN'T GET THROUGH FIREWALL
BACK 4 SPACES!
ONLINE GAME OVERDRAWS CHECKING ACCOUNT
MOVE BACK 3
INTERNET CONNECTION DROPS AT CRITICAL MOMENT
LOSE A TURN!
CLICK 7,342 TIMES TO REACH LEVEL 3 IN BASKET WEAVING
LOSE 2 TURNS!
AFTER ALL-NIGHT LAN PARTY, GIRLFRIEND DUMPS YOU
BACK ONE
YOU SEE A CLEVER AD FOR A PLAY-BY-MAIL GAME!
MOVE AHEAD 2
YOUR ONLINE CHARACTER DIES - CORPSE RUN!
MOVE BACK 3
YOU ORDER FREE PBM RULES
ROLL AGAIN!
YOU FIND AN IN-GAME SPOUSE
ADD BALL & CHAIN TO INVENTORY
YOUR MMORPG CHARACTER GETS NERFED
GO BACK TO START!
SPEND 18 HOURS IMPROVING CHARACTER SKILLS
LOSE A TURN!
YOU WIN A FREE SETUP AND RULES!
CALL OR WRITE US TODAY!
FREE PBM START-UP KIT ARRIVES!
MOVE AHEAD 3
YOU ARE THE PLAY-BY-MAIL TOURNAMENT CHAMPION!!
MOVE AHEAD 3
A GROUP OF NOOBS GETS YOU KILLED - AGAIN
MOVE BACK 2
ZONING, PLEASE WAIT...
AND LOSE A TURN!
THREE SECOND LAG - LOSE EQUIPMENT & INVESNTORY
LOSE A TURN
PBM TURN ARRIVES EARLY
ROLL AGAIN
GRAWK! CUT OUT THE IMAGE TO THE RIGHT, FOLD IT INTO A SIX-SIDED DIE, AND YOU'RE READY TO PLAY!


DORK TOWER®
By JOHN KOVALIC
HEY, IGOR. SORRY I HAD TO MISS GAMING TONIGHT, BUT BUSINESS IS BUSINESS...
THAT'S OK...
AS IT TURNS OUT, I HAD A PAPER I HAD TO FINISH OFF, SO I HAD TO SKIP TOO.
YOU? SKIP GAMING TOO?
I WONDER WHAT MATT AND CARSON ENDED UP PLAYING, THEN...?
ACTUALLY, CARSON HAD TO BAIL, AS WELL. IT'S HIS MOM'S BIRTHDAY.
WE ALL BAILED ON GAMING? THAT HASN'T HAPPENED IN YEARS!
I KNOW. IT FEELS ODD, DOESN'T IT?
IT'S WEIRD HOW A WEEKLY GAMING GROUP BECOMES SUCH AN INTEGRAL PART OF ONE'S LIFE.
HOW'S MATT TAKING TONIGHT'S GAME'S CANCELLATION?
UM... WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT IT BEING CANCELLED?
NO, POLLY PRISSYPANTS! YOU CAN NOT ATTACK A TURBONIUM DRAGON WITH MAGICAL RESISTANCE WITH A SPELL OF LIZARD SMITING! BAD POLLY PRISSYPANTS...
KOVALIC WITH APOLOGIES TO SOUTH PARK

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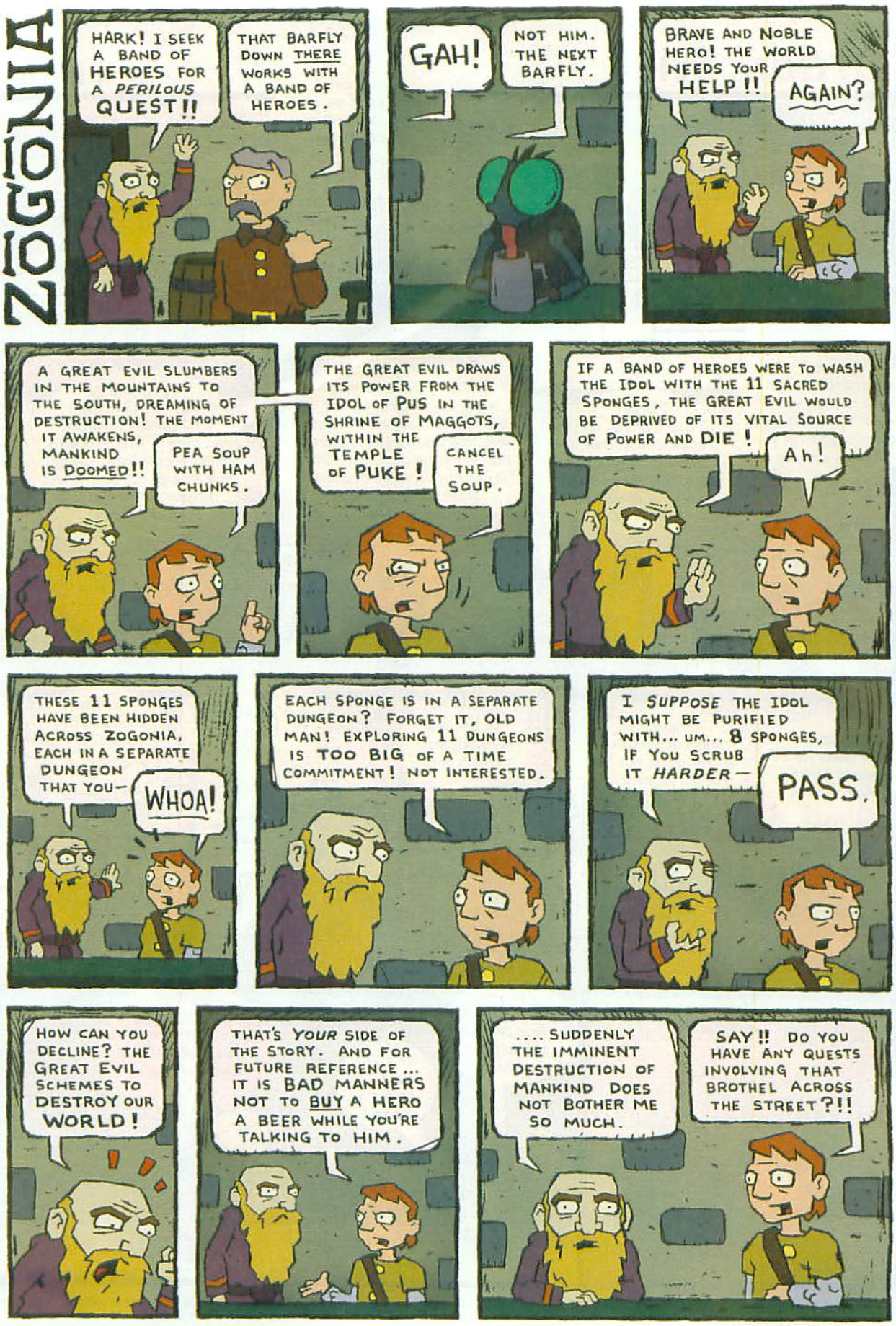
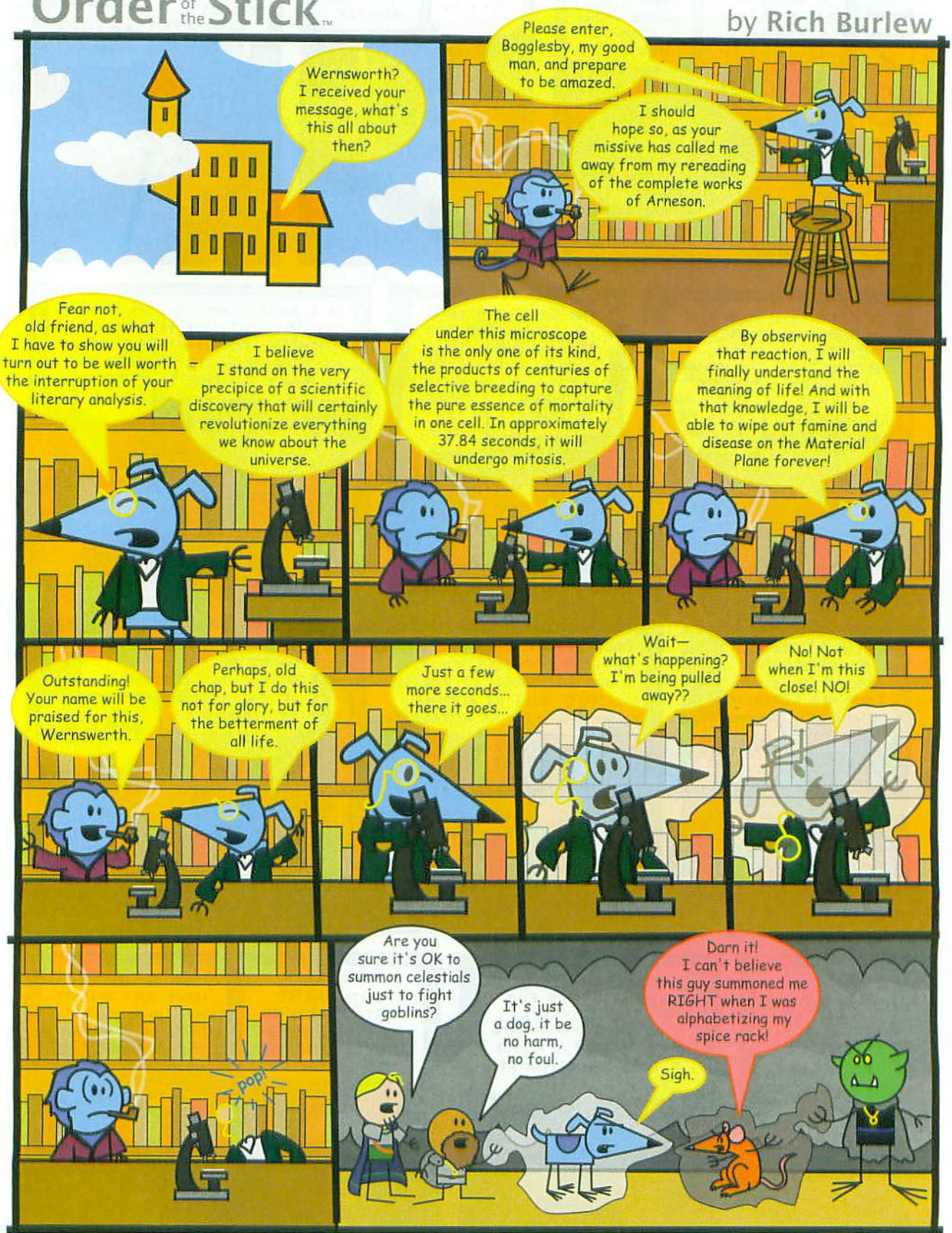

ZOGONIA
HARK! I SEEK A BAND OF HEROES FOR A PERILOUS QUEST!!
THAT BARFLY DOWN THERE WORKS WITH A BAND OF HEROES.
GAH!
NOT HIM. THE NEXT BARFLY.
BRAVE AND NOBLE HERO! THE WORLD NEEDS YOUR HELP!!
AGAIN?
TONY MOSELEY © 2005 WWW.ZOGONIA.COM
A GREAT EVIL SLUMBERS IN THE MOUNTAINS TO THE SOUTH, DREAMING OF DESTRUCTION! THE MOMENT IT AWAKENS, MANKIND IS DOOMED!!
PEA SOUP WITH HAM CHUNKS.
THE GREAT EVIL DRAWS ITS POWER FROM THE IDOL OF PUS IN THE SHRINE OF MAGGOTS, WITHIN THE TEMPLE OF PUKE!
CANCEL THE SOUP.
IF A BAND OF HEROES WERE TO WASH THE IDOL WITH THE 11 SACRED SPONGES, THE GREAT EVIL WOULD BE DEPRIVED OF ITS VITAL SOURCE OF POWER AND DIE!
Ah!
THESE 11 SPONGES HAVE BEEN HIDDEN ACROSS ZOGONIA, EACH IN A SEPARATE DUNGEON THAT YOU—
WHOA!
EACH SPONGE IS IN A SEPARATE DUNGEON? FORGET IT, OLD MAN! EXPLORING 11 DUNGEONS IS TOO BIG OF A TIME COMMITMENT! NOT INTERESTED.
I SUPPOSE THE IDOL MIGHT BE PURIFIED WITH... UM... 8 SPONGES, IF YOU SCRUB IT HARDER—
PASS.
HOW CAN YOU DECLINE? THE GREAT EVIL SCHEMES TO DESTROY OUR WORLD!
THAT'S YOUR SIDE OF THE STORY. AND FOR FUTURE REFERENCE... IT IS BAD MANNERS NOT TO BUY A HERO A BEER WHILE YOU'RE TALKING TO HIM.
.... SUDDENLY THE IMMINENT DESTRUCTION OF MANKIND DOES NOT BOTHER ME SO MUCH.
SAY!! DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTS INVOLVING THAT BROTHEL ACROSS THE STREET?!!

The Order of the Stick™

by Rich Burlew


Wernsworth? I received your message, what's this all about then?
Please enter, Bogglesby, my good man, and prepare to be amazed.
I should hope so, as your missive has called me away from my rereading of the complete works of Arneson.
Fear not, old friend, as what I have to show you will turn out to be well worth the interruption of your literary analysis.
I believe I stand on the very precipice of a scientific discovery that will certainly revolutionize everything we know about the universe.
The cell under this microscope is the only one of its kind, the products of centuries of selective breeding to capture the pure essence of mortality in one cell. In approximately 37.84 seconds, it will undergo mitosis.
By observing that reaction, I will finally understand the meaning of life! And with that knowledge, I will be able to wipe out famine and disease on the Material Plane forever!
Outstanding! Your name will be praised for this, Wernswerth.
Perhaps, old chap, but I do this not for glory, but for the betterment of all life.
Just a few more seconds... there it goes...
Wait— what's happening? I'm being pulled away??
No! Not when I'm this close! NO!
pop!
Are you sure it's OK to summon celestials just to fight goblins?
It's just a dog, it be no harm, no foul.
Sigh.
Darn it! I can't believe this guy summoned me RIGHT when I was alphabetizing my spice rack!

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